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The River Danube as a Holocaust Landscape

Journey of the Kladovo Transport

The River Danube as a Holocaust Landscape: Journey of the Kladovo transport

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Abstract

This is a practice-as-research study that traces the journey of the Kladovo transport through documentary film *Two Emperors and a Queen* and written thesis. The Kladovo transport refers to the group of about 1200 Jewish refugees from central Europe who, in late 1939, attempted to flee Nazi persecutions through an organised illegal escape voyage down the river Danube. However, instead of reaching the Romanian Black Sea coast, from where they were hoping to board an overseas boat to Palestine, their ill-fated river journey never got further than Serbia. Without the overseas boat waiting for them in Romania, the little fleet of Jewish passengers was forced to moor in Kladovo, a Serbian town on the Danube. After months of frustrated immobility, the group finally left Kladovo in September 1940, but only to be moved upstream to another Serbian town – Šabac. This is where their persecutors caught up with them after the Second World War reached Yugoslavia in April 1941. Most of the men from the group were shot in October 1941 in Zasavica near Šabac; women and children were sent to Belgrade, to the Judenlager Semlin and were killed in a gas van during the spring 1942. Apart from several independent escapes that were successful, survivors included a group of about 200 youths who were granted legal certificates for Palestine and left Yugoslavia just before the outbreak of war.

The journey of the Kladovo transport is charged with striking relationships to time, like the long periods of stasis spent on the Danube waters. I explore this failed escape attempt as a multi-temporal event, with the camera as my main research tool. I argue for the potential of the audio-visual media to communicate the layering of multiple temporalities inherent in this historical narrative, linking the past with the 'now' when my research takes place.

Dedication

While I was on the second year of this doctoral project, my mother was diagnosed with throat cancer. After a year and half of struggle with the illness she died in September 2016.

Most of my research visits to Serbia since February 2015 usually combined conducting research and gathering of the audio-visual material for my film on the Kladovo transport with caring, together with my sister and her family, for my mother as she was going through the operation, chemo and radiotherapy and palliative care. Working on this doctoral project helped me cope with my mother's illness and going through the period of grief after she died.

I dedicate this project to her.

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I am very grateful to the History Department at the University of Bristol for awarding me the DEAS scholarship, which was instrumental in turning my research on the Kladovo transport into a doctoral project. I am extremely grateful to my supervisors, Angela Piccini and Tim Cole, for all their kind and well balanced comments, guidance and support which enabled me to contextualize my art practice within broad interdisciplinary body of knowledge. Also, I wish to thank my colleagues and all the staff at the Department of Film and Television,

especially Naz Massoumi, Chris Barnett, Gareth Evans and Jacqueline Mainguard, for the discussions and practical advice that helped over the years to push the project forward. The Department of Film and Television also provided technical support for the production of my film for which I am very thankful.

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Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my partner, Thomas Kador, for his unconditional support and participation in all aspects of this work.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

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I Introduction

What I don't know is - who is the pharaoh who lets the people of Israel return to their land and under what conditions?
Who are the protagonists from the Zionist organization in Vienna and elsewhere who directly helped the emigration?
Please tell me something about yourself and other group leaders on the ships.
What was the social background of the refugees? Could you confirm the hypotheses that they came from materially rather underprivileged backgrounds and that the Zionist organization had to pay for their ransom?
You, of course, remember with sentiment the harmonious life on the boats while they navigated in hope; but what happened when the life on board the ships and tugboats became a constraint, and worse - a broken illusion?
What was the Yugoslavian government like that couldn't (or wouldn't) provide asylum to the endangered emigrants or help them reach their goal?

Who were the city administrations along the Yugoslavian Danube that didn't provide refuge to the passengers?
Who was the mayor of Šabac who had the 'guts' to accept them after all?
These are all the questions that bother me; so I would kindly ask you to respond to them, to refer me to the literature and documentation. In order to revive, in my own way, the epopee of the 'Two emperors and a queen' I am asking you to substantiate or deny my theses and to add some new ones.
I would also like to ask for your authorization for this work and for the title 'Two emperors and a queen', as I don't believe that I could find a prettier one.
In hope that you will respond to my letter please accept my deepest regards,
Stanoje Backo Aleksić (19/9/1977) (my translation from Serbian)

These are the closing words of a letter, written by cineaste Stanoje Backo Aleksić, to Naftali Bata Gedalja. Naftali Bata Gedalja was a representative of the Yugoslavian Jewish Community, and from December 1939, lived for a number of months alongside a group of Jewish refugees that came to be known as the Kladovo transport. I came across this letter in

the ‘Gedalja *fund*’ (folder) in the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade while researching this group of refugees. It forms the first in a relatively brief correspondence (each wrote three letters) between the two men in 1977-1978. In them, they discuss Aleksić’s idea of making a film about the Kladovo transport with Gedalja’s assistance in writing the script. Therefore Aleksić’s questions are designed to help him imagine his film. This list of questions – with which I start both my dissertation and my film – is crucial in setting the context of this project, which consists of two main parts: a documentary film and a written thesis. As a whole, my study seeks to contribute new understandings of the Danube as a Holocaust landscape through a practice-as-research engagement with the Kladovo transport.

The Kladovo transport, also known as the ‘Transport Kladovo-Šabac’ (Lebl 1997; Ofer and Weiner 1996), refers to a group of some 1000 Jewish emigrants from central Europe who left Vienna in the late autumn of 1939 in an attempt to flee Nazi persecution. They embarked on an illegal escape journey down the river Danube, which was supposed to take them to the Black Sea and further on to Eretz Israel. Along the way they were joined by approximately 200 more Jewish refugees, from various parts of central and Eastern Europe. The group received its name from Kladovo, a small Serbian border town with Romania on the River Danube, where their transport was held up for several months. The majority of the group never got beyond Serbia and were eventually captured and died at the hands of their persecutors in 1941-42. Their failed escape attempt forms the central topic of my project.

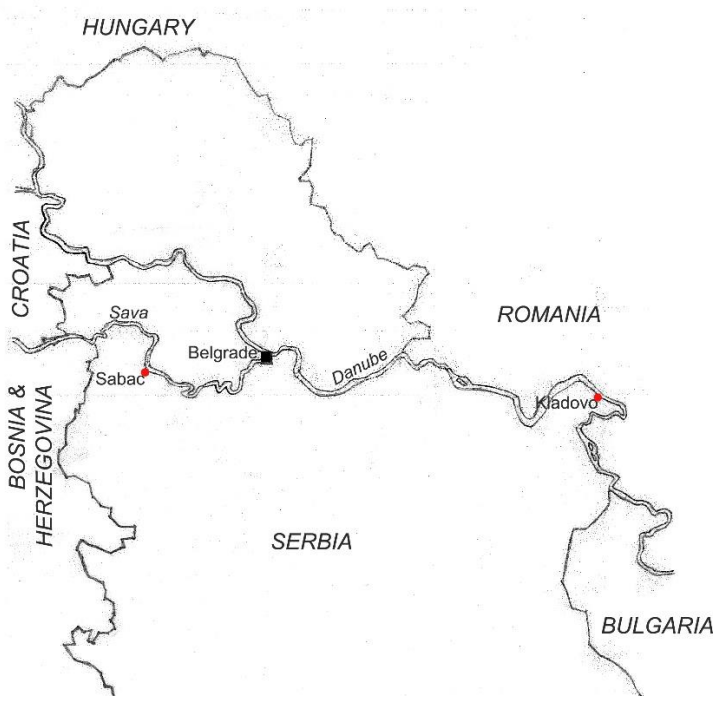

Figure 1 Map showing locations of Kladovo and Sabac

The story of the Kladovo transport is a Holocaust narrative and as such has been discussed mainly from a socio-political standpoint by previous researchers (Anderl & Manoschek 2001, 2004; Aliav & Mann 1974; Dragić 2013; Gedalja 1958; Jakovljević 2011; Jovanović 1979; Lahaw 1982; Lebl 1997; Mihajlović & Mitrović 2006; Ofer 1990; Ofer and Weiner 1996; Vojinović 2015). Some, like Gedalja (1958) or Jovanović (1979), wrote to provide witness for historical events; others have questioned guilt and responsibility in regard to the failure of this escape attempt (Aliav & Mann 1974; contributions in Mihajlović & Mitrović 2006). Anderl and Manoschek (2001, 2004) and Lebl (1997) provide particularly thorough, in-depth analyses of different administrative, financial and social factors underpinning the unfolding of the journey of the Kladovo transport. In contrast to this, I will suggest another perspective framed through artistic media and, more specifically, documentary film. Although several artists have tackled this historical narrative in their art works (Alisa Douer in art installation, Mirjana Dragić Lehner in painting, Nikola Radić Lucati in photography), my work brings forth the narrative in a unique way, especially considering the time and depth of analyses that the practice based PhD has provided, as well as a unique frame through academic-artistic research.

Also, my study significantly contributes to the written scholarship on the Kladovo transport as the first substantial text about the transport written in English. My intention is not simply to fill in the gap in the existing body of scholarship (especially in Anglophone literature). Instead I wish to approach this Holocaust episode with a fresh eye. In particular, my contribution can be viewed within the context of creative/artistic modes of academic knowledge (Bell 2006; Jones et al 2009; McLaughlin 2002; Nelson 2009, 2013), as well as within the growing field of Holocaust geographies (Charlesworth 2004; Cole 2015, 2016; Giaccaria and Minca 2016; Gigliotti 2009; Knowles et al 2014; Meng 2011; Stone 2004). Responding to Holocaust scholar Andrew Charlesworth's recommendation to follow the cinematic gaze in creative approaches to the spatiality of the past, my work crucially adds an artistic dimension to scholarly engagements with places and spaces of the past.

Two Emperors and a Queen

At the heart of my dissertation is a film. *Two Emperors and a Queen*, borrows its title from the first publication on the Kladovo transport, Naftali Bata Gedalja's text 'Dva cara i jedna kraljica', which was published in the *Jewish Almanac* 1957-58. The title refers to the names of the three vessels, 'Emperor Dušan', 'Tsar Nikolai II' and 'Queen Maria', on which the Kladovo transport refugees lived for about six months, before they were allowed to move on shore. It was reading this publication that prompted Aleksić to contact Gadalja with the idea of making a film. However, in contrast to Aleksić's idea of a dramatization of the story, my film is an experimental documentary with a length of 66 minutes. The entire film is made in split screen. It predominantly shows the locations that are relevant for the journey of the Kladovo transport across Serbia. Additionally, the film incorporates a number of stills in the form of archive photographs. Besides the sounds that are audible at the locations filmed, the sound for the film predominantly comprises voice-overs. The film is positioned as an epistolary form of address (Kamuf 2005; Naficy 2001; Sobchack 1992), with its text entirely consisting of letters, diaries and archive documents read by different voices and in the language that they were originally written in, German and Serbian. The documents are

primarily written by the members of the Kladovo transport, but are joined with some other voices from the archive, such as Aleksić's.

In choosing to make an 'epistolary narrative' (Naficy 2001) I am sharing the historians' passion for the 'raw' archival material (Hilberg 2001) that I am exposing to the audience's gaze. In this way, my film raises key documentary questions of address (Bruzzi 2001; Sobchack 1992): who were the letters meant for and who do I address through them? As someone who is involved in making a film about the Kladovo transport, which is something that Gedalja and Aleksić never accomplished, I am fundamentally responding to the text from Aleksić's letter. With my own directorial position I take up, extend and complicate Aleksić's auteurist approach to the Kladovo transport. That is, I attempt to decentre the voice of the film from my own directorial vision towards the voices of the people caught up in the history of the transport. I am exploring the journey itself as a temporal event, linking not only the historical moment of the journey in 1939-42 with the 'now' of the making my film (2013-18), but also, through the reference to Aleksić and Gedalja (among other), I am incorporating the meanwhile, joining the dots in time that point towards similar (yet very different) memory practices.

The film is made within a small team: I mainly filmed alone or accompanied by my partner, who acted as a camera and sound assistant. I also was primarily solely responsible for the technical processes concerning filming, sound recording and editing (although taking on board comments and suggestions by my supervisors, colleagues and friends). Working in this way meant that the process of making the film was easier to coordinate leaving space for split second decisions and greater freedom for experimenting along the way. As I am putting the emphasis on thinking with my camera, being able to think in action and question my thinking in situ was instrumental for the successful running of the project. I felt that this would have been much more difficult if there was a bigger team involved in the process. Therefore, my very small team of two enabled me to prioritize the openness of the process over managing a larger crew.

Main argument and research questions

My main argument is that artistic audio-visual discourse framed as and through time-based media is particularly well suited to provide insight into the complex layering of different temporalities inherent in the history of the Kladovo transport. Experiencing time is key for meaningful engagement with this group of passengers, whose journey lasted for over 2 years and was dominated by long periods of immobility and stasis, filled with anticipation for the journey to resume. Because of its unique position within time (Bazin 2005), artistic, time-based media set up a particularly favourable context for visceral engagement with the passing of time and layering of different temporalities of the places that formed part of the journey. The camera functions as my main research tool with the objective of (re)visiting the material vestiges relevant to this Holocaust narrative. Focusing on the group's movements and their experience of the long duration spent in the liminal space marked by the Danube waters, I explore the relationship between the riverscape and the Holocaust trauma experienced by the members of the Kladovo transport in an aesthetic response to the unspeakable (Adorno 1949). Utilising cinematic discourse I seek to unearth and map out their journey itself, and, further still, the complex layering of time that provides a tangible link between the 'now' – when my research takes place – and 'then' – implying the particular historical moment of the journey of the Kladovo transport between 1939 and 1942.

Both the documentary film and the thesis are organised around the following **research questions**:

1. How does the camera inscribe the materiality and physicality of the journey of the Kladovo transport as an historical map of the Holocaust?

2. How does the cinematic experience based on this historical narrative contribute to gaining new knowledge on the subject in the context of contemporary modes and methodologies of academic practice and research?

3. To what extent is making a film an appropriate way to tackle this narrative?

4. How do the artistic tools and media create a tangible thread between different temporalities that both link and separate the then, the now and the meanwhile (implying the period between the moment when my research takes place and the past that I am set to investigate)?

5. 'All human action takes and makes place' (Ethington 2007, 465), so in what ways does the sharing of the same place between different actors, times and temporalities, offer a shared platform for a more immersive engagement with the past?

In order to address my research questions, I organize my study around a single, main theme – temporality. My approach in large part derives from the two basic standpoints of my study, namely the historical narrative of the journey of the Kladovo transport and the cinematic discourse. The central theme is however, filtered through a large interdisciplinary field. My work is problem- and project- oriented and I will not aim to provide a detailed literature review of any one discipline. I will draw examples from and reference the sources that are relevant primarily from the perspective of my study.

The written exegesis is divided into eight chapters: I Introduction; II Context; III Temporality; IV Winter; V Spring and Summer; VI Autumn and Another Winter; VII Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring; and VIII Conclusions. Most of the chapters are entitled according to the seasons in which certain episodes of the journey discussed in that chapter took place. In this way I am framing the central theme of temporality as seasonal, thus signalling one of the temporal registers of the journey of the Kladovo transport. In this writing I explore and bring together the history of this failed escape attempt, relevant theoretical contexts and the process of making of the film *Two Emperors and a Queen*. In the first chapter I introduce the project, its main arguments and the research questions. The second chapter addresses the context of this study. I first position my work within the context of the academic practice-as-research after which I discuss the main methods I utilise

in this project. This is followed by the historical context within which the journey of the Kladovo transport took place. From here I move on to have a closer look at passengers' experiences of embarking on this journey, which I then analyse in the context of how they appear in my film. The third chapter discusses the main theme in my study: temporality. I first explain what I mean by this term and why I find it central in my approach to the historical narrative on the Kladovo transport. I then contextualise it within the discourses of Holocaust geographies, cinema as an embodied experience of time and Holocaust representations. Chapters IV, V, VI and VII each progress in greater detail the historical account on the journey of the Kladovo transport and are accompanied by specific examples on how I mediate that particular part of the story in my film.

II Context

Figure 2 Archive of the Jewish Historical Museum Belgrade. Photo by Vesna Lukic

My research on the Kladovo transport started in 2012 in the archive of the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade (figure 2). After learning about the story of the transport from Mirjana Lehner Dragić, a Jewish painter who was, at the time, working on a series of paintings inspired by the group, I started thinking about the potential of telling it through film, as the narrative seemed to offer a great cinematic potential. After several visits to the museum archive, where most of the material on the Kladovo transport is preserved in a large box, I started conducting interviews with the members of Serbian Jewish community who were involved in organizing a big commemorative event dedicated to the transport in 2002, which included visiting all the locations relevant to the transport across Serbia. Milica Mihajlović, the former Director of the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade, and Aleksandar Mošić, a prominent member of the Jewish community, were my first interviewees. I video-recorded interviews with both of them, hoping to show them later in my film. However, I gradually moved away from the idea of the conventional 'expository' mode of documentary film as Bill Nichols has defined it (1991). A typical 'talking heads' approach combined with voiceover would potentially create a temporal, aesthetic and conceptual distance between

viewer and the content. Instead, I became more interested in experimenting with documentary form and framing my work as reflective, experimental, poetic and performative (Bruzzi 2001; Nichols 2010; Renov 1993, 2004). That is, I wished to signal my own presence as filmmaker in the work, my own active role in the legacy of the Holocaust and to experiment with documentary forms that aim to alert the viewer to the complex constructedness of historical narratives. In order to undertake this work, I needed to situate my exploration as academic practice-as-research.

Practice-as-Research

> Hitchcock's premonition will come true: a camera-consciousness which will no longer be defined by the movements it is able to follow or make, but by the mental connections it is able to enter into. And it becomes questioning, responding, objecting, provoking, theorematizing, hypothesizing, experimenting, in accordance with an open list of logical conjunctions ('or', 'therefore', 'if', 'because', 'actually', 'although…'), or in accordance with the functions of thought in a *cinéma-vérité*, which, as Rouch says, means rather truth of cinema [*vérité du cinéma*]. (Deleuze 1989, 23)

In this study, rather than approaching my research through conventional academic writing, I am exploring my subject matter, raising and discussing my research queries through artistic practice. By doing so, I am joining the growing community of practitioners in the academy set to challenge or contribute to the diversity of ways to engage with general knowledge. My project is developed within the context of practice-as-research (PaR) but closely relates to other academic pursuits that join together artistic practice and research, such as practice-based research, practice-led research or practice research (Nelson 2013). In a wider context, PaR should be seen as greatly adding to the contemporary discourses on creative humanities and research-based learning/education (Fung 2017). PaR's particular contribution to scholarly communities has been the establishment of alternative outcomes

of research beyond the logocentrism of the conventional academy. I will first take a look at the brief history of and main debates within PaR, before I turn to discussing the role of PaR in my own project.

The Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 brought about equal status for (the former) polytechnics and universities and consequently opened the possibility of obtaining the highest academic degrees through (artistic) practice. This meant juxtaposing theory and practice in the British educational system and was followed by both conceptual and administrative debates (Kershaw & Piccini 2003). Similarly to the British HE system, these discussions have also taken place internationally (Barrett & Bolt 2010; Biggs & Karlsson 2011). Conceptually, Nelson for example, points to the seemingly different mind-sets in studying something and making it as one of the arguments raised against art practice as a form of knowing (Nelson 2013, 16). He relates the problem of knowledge to the Cartesian mind-body divide that has resulted in considering art practice as intellectually inferior to verbal and textual academic knowledge (Nelson 2009). In this context, PaR as a way of thinking through making that is recognised and awarded highest academic degrees, challenges this presumed divide and paves the way towards the discourse around art practice as embodied research (Duby & Barker 2017; Johnson 2011; Jones 2013).

In film, PaR greatly adds to the reflective and reflexive discourses around cinematic media (Nelson 2013; Nichols 2010; Rascaroli 2017; Renov 2004). In a certain way it could be argued that some of the films produced in the academy join the long list of cinematic formats, such as experimental film, or essay and notebook films, that have challenged the established genres and mainstream cinema and engaged directly with the raw qualities of the audio-visual media. The numerous online peer reviewed publications of academic PaR works, such as in Screenworks and JAR (Journal of Artistic Research), give evidence of great versatility in formats, topics and discourses (for example Callaghan 2012; Daniels 2012, 2017; Parker 2017; Turina 2018). Furthermore, because of the particular balance and the inherent relationship between theory and practice, PaR also pushes the boundaries of interdisciplinary research.

Drawing from a broad interdisciplinary body of knowledge, this study makes a very specific contribution as a PaR project on a Holocaust topic. Certain practitioners, like Jill Daniels

(2014) or Romana Turina (2018) make reference to Holocaust representations especially in relation to mediating memory and trauma. Others, like Jessica Noske-Turner in *One Blood (*2009) include the research on Holocaust in some part of their study. *One Blood (*2009*)* is a biographical piece on William Cooper, Aboriginal rights activist from the early 20th century, who after Kristallnacht strongly protested against Jewish persecution. This is why Noske-Turner included the interviews with Holocaust survivors as she was relating them to Indigenous combat against racism (Noske-Turner 2012). My study is, however, to the best of my knowledge, the first PaR film project entirely based on a Holocaust narrative, and as such it aims to contribute and make an impact on a broader academic audience, including Holocaust studies.

Inside Stories

Two PaR projects have been particularly important guides and sources of inspiration through my work process: Jill Daniels' *Not Reconciled* (2009) and Cahal McLaughlin's work on the Maze and Long Kesh Prison, from film to creating an online archive (2004 -). They are both based on mediating traumatic experience related to conflict, they draw from historical subject matter and they raise research questions through practice in a similar way to my project. Furthermore, in both these examples, locations/ places/ landscapes take a predominant role, and the relationship between the camera and the physicality of these places, as well as the way in which the presence of the camera indicates the presence of the subject, i.e. the author/researcher, is of great significance.

The experimental documentary *Not Reconciled* (2009) tells the story of Belchite, a small medieval town in Spain, which was deliberately left in ruins by General Franco, after his victory in a battle there during the Spanish civil war (1936-39). The film combines fiction and documentary elements: the narrative is voiced over the image in whispers of ghosts, two imaginary characters, who presumably died there in the war. The poetic and evocative sound haunts the ruins. The eloquence of the dead is interrupted with the awkward silence in the interviews with the living, who reside in a new small town built in immediate proximity to the ruins. Responding in fact to this silence in the present which is the result of the trauma of the past, Daniels creates the two spectres, two 'surrogate witnesses' (Daniels

2014, 5) who, by the virtue of their elusive presence in the film, speak for the absence in the historical world. Daniels specifically identifies the relationship between the flux of time and the place (Belchite) as one of her research queries and also discusses the particular relationship between the sound and the image as a way of tackling the traumatic past (2014).

Although I approach my subject matter differently, in the sense that I am not creating fictional characters in my film, I am, like Daniels, responding to the silence of the places where trauma had been experienced. While Belchite was left in ruins deliberately, the locations where the Kladovo transport was staying along their journey slipped into oblivion, unmarked, possibly as a result of neglect in a different socio-political context to the one in Spain. Nonetheless, both in Belchite and in locations in Kladovo, Šabac and Belgrade, the primarily ruinous places seem to evoke another time that they have witnessed and are now tacitly signalling through their physical properties.

Cahal McLaughlin deals with the more recent history of the (Northern Irish) Troubles, by focusing on particular places - prisons for political inmates – starting with the Maze and Long Kesh Prison, which is now abandoned and in a state of ruin. In 2004, McLaughlin released a documentary film *Inside Stories: Memories from the Maze and Long Kesh Prison* (2004), a 94 minutes long film that consists of three parts, which represent three different testimonies. His interviewees are two former prisoners and one former prison officer who guide us, as viewers, through the prison site with their stories. A hand-held camera follows their lead from the gate, through the yard, corridors, prison cells and common rooms as they evoke their memories.

Made in participatory and observational mode (Nichols 2010), this documentary was also presented as a multi-screen gallery installation. In 2005, in the Catalyst gallery in Belfast the three parts were shown separately, which apparently represented a problem because the three sounds interfered with one another making it difficult to follow the story (McAvera 2005). Critics have pointed to the ‘docu-soap’ quality and the lack of editing in the film(s), expressing their surprise that a gallery ‘choose to exhibit the work of an academic over the work of an artist’ (McAvera 2005). While this comment clearly refers to a division between,

or even mutual exclusion of, the artistic and the academic and relates to the mind – body divide as discussed by Nelson (2009), consequently it seems a somewhat outdated. Several academics – practitioners, like two Turner prize winners, Elizabeth Price (2012) and Lubaina Himid (2017) or Clio Barnard with her films being shown in cinemas around the world prove that the boundary seems porous and that the transitions between academic and non-academic are a lot smoother nowadays. It is however because of these transitions that I have decided to address Cahal McLaughlin's work, as it seems to follow through different points of discussion around PaR.

What started as a documentary film, developed into an art installation and in time grew into an open online project; the *Prison Memory Archive* (McLaughlin 2018). It also expanded to explore the female 'Armagh Gaol' prison. This growing oral history archive tests new platforms for PaR. In a similar form to the one in the original documentary film, the camera follows the protagonist around the former prison spaces while they talk about their memories. The current format, the online platform, allows for an interactive engagement with the content and thus makes it more accessible to the new audiences/users. Like this, is seems that the author essentially deconstructed the film (as a set duration) into an open archive.

This participatory project aims to preserve the memories of relatively recent events. It is conducted with diegetic sound (the source of the sound is visible in the frame) and handheld camera. McLaughlin captures the living memories as the witnesses return to the places where they were (mainly) incarcerated. This brings to mind Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), where the surviving witnesses of the Holocaust returned to the locations of former concentration camps and were retelling their traumatizing memories of the events that occurred on these sites. Both Daniels's and McLaughlin's work have provided a PaR context for thinking about the role of the audio-visual media in providing space for witnessing the past. They have further informed my thinking and decisions on how to position the outcome(s) of my study, and helped emphasise the openness, fluidity of form and the importance of process in PaR.

Methods

Doing/undoing history

The script for *Two Emperors and a Queen* is composed of excerpts from letters, memoires and documents written by the members of the Kladovo transport, or the immediate witnesses to their journey, with the exception of the cineaste, Stanoje Backo Aleksić. Some of the material I have collected myself from the archive. Some is, on the other hand, taken from Gebriele Anderl and Walter Manoscheck's book (2001) *Gescheiterte Flucht: Der 'Kladovo-Transport' auf dem Weg nach Palaestina 1939-1942* (*The Failed Escape: the Jewish 'Kladovo transport' on its way to Palestine 1939-42*; my translation from German, the book is not translated into English), which was my main reference regarding the history of the Kladovo transport in this project. However, each time when I would return to this book, I was less and less reading the historians' interpretations and more and more concentrating on the direct quotes - witnesses' accounts on the events that they have experienced themselves. I was looking for raw material that could not only tell of the events and provide information, but would also be able to evoke some of the atmosphere of the times and the experience that I was curious to bring forth in my film. Because of this, in time I started feeling that I was in a sense undoing the history and the way in which the story of the Kladovo transport has been told before, in order to tell it in my own way.

After decontextualizing the direct sources from the way they were presented in the book and added some other quotes that I have found in the archive, I started assembling them together without any comments in-between. In leaving the raw material to seemingly 'speak for itself' I am asserting my wish to enable direct insight into the experiences of the past. The script is however carefully constructed to communicate the history of the Kladovo transport, in the way I understand it and chose to tell it. As a filmmaker I am making my choices of the quotes and these become my narrative frames. What I present as a kind of objective practice is the act of a bricoleur (Dezeuze 2008), through which I am acknowledging the process of meaning making as deriving from the interrelation of independent parts. Each of these parts is decontextualized/taken out from their original frameworks to which they maintain an indexical rapport, including being charged with specific temporal qualities (deriving from another time). These then collide to create new meaning when re-appropriated and put together into a new whole. As already Levi-Strauss

pointed out, this highlights the process of doing as distinct, or even more important that the end-object (Dezeuze 2008). Taking on board temporal qualities of the independent parts, the whole, as an assemblage that derives from the process of doing, highlights the idea of temporality as optimal conceptual framework for interrelating diverse materials.

Also, in seemingly erasing any boundary between the viewer and the content I am echoing the debates between direct cinema and cinema verité on the veracity of documentary representations (for example Bruzzi 2001; Cousins & Macdonald 1998). Direct testimony appears to have a snap-shot quality, as, in its authenticity, it seems to precede any kind of aesthetic interference (Bruzzi 2001). This idea also links to the historians' passion for the 'raw' archival material and the ways in which archival documents perform in historical narratives (Hilberg 2001; Steedman 2001).

Considerations around the performativity of archival material inform some of my thinking on how to record and use the sound and the voice over in my film. After collaging the quotes into the script, I contacted members of the Austrian and Serbian Jewish communities, as well as some individuals from Austria and Serbia, who agreed to voice out the texts. Most of the participants did not know about the Kladovo transport prior to this project and some have responded emotionally upon learning the destiny of the transport. Rather than approach the voiceovers as a theatrical performance, I directed the participants to read the script in a 'flat' tone. On one hand, I wanted to emphasize the textual nature of the source material, i.e. letter, dairy entry, memoire or chronicle. On the other, I believe that the text is so poignant and powerful in its own right that overly adding to it (by means of emotional interpretation) would dilute its impact on the viewer. I wished to avoid transforming the testimony into spectacle (Carlson 2002). In this way I have created a tension between the message that the text conveys and the flatness of the delivery. Absence of music in the film also references the rawness of the source material that I wanted to put forward in the film.

Therefore, voicing out the archive is a key part of my doing/ reassembling the history of the Kladovo transport. The voice recording was happening independently from filming the locations. I have recorded the voices in rooms at the University of Bristol, UCL (University

College London) and in some private apartments in London, Belgrade, Pančevo (Serbia) and Vienna. I consider this process to have an important participatory component as it reaches out into the communities outside academia and art world, and engages people with history in new ways.

Filming/ Embodied research

> Any study begins with lived experience, being there, in the world. It must necessarily be embodied, cantered in a body opening out itself to the world, a carnal relationship. The exploitations of basic bodily dyads provides one entry point into the study of place and landscape. A concentric graded sense of place and landscape provides another basic way in which meaning may be explored. Both originate in the body and extend outwards. (Tilley 2004, 29)

In filming, my focus is on places. How to film the locations, in terms of the camera position and frame is informed by the historical narrative and contextualised within the discourse of audio-visual media. Frames are set to show the places, from a height of an average adult person (Tilley 1994 on the human body as the yardstick), without extreme camera angles. The camera is mainly static, positioned on a tripod. I am interested in emphasizing two main ideas through the positioning of the camera; first, stasis, that is absence of movement, as a central theme in any narrative on the Kladovo transport, and, second, loss - absence of people – as a particular commentary on places, such as those shown in the film, where the Holocaust was experienced, memorialized or forgotten (Cole 2016). Allowing the viewer to set the course for her own gaze within the frame, while showing the place 'empty', the static camera seems to correspond better with the loss and stasis. The somewhat more 'shaky' hand-held camera perspective would signal a corporeal presence of a subject (i.e. the person holding the camera) and thus engage with different kind of aesthetic implications (Hesselberth 2014); in a static shot (using a tripod), I am leaving the viewer alone to find her own way through the image or to follow the guidance of the voice over. Although some passers-by appear in several shots – mainly walking along the streets in

Šabac, or on the shore of the river Sava – I aim to mediate a sense of emptiness. Through my research visits to the locations relevant to the journey of the Kladovo transport, I have found them today in a way 'empty', in the sense of being out of use, in the state of ruin, or at least with visible marks of the passage of time. Although more than 70 years after the Second World War had ended and although the journey of the Kladovo transport was but an episode in their overall histories, these places could still be seen through this Deleuze's description of the post-war Europe:

> The fact is that, in Europe, the post-war period has greatly increased the situations which we no longer know how to react to, in spaces which we no longer know how to describe. These were 'any spaces whatever', deserted but inhabited, disused warehouses, waste ground, cities in the course of demolition or reconstruction. And in these any-space-whatever a new race of characters was stirring, kind of mutant: they saw rather than acted, they were seers. (Deleuze 1989, xi)

The camera dwells on the locations, and records the actual (current) state of the places where the Jewish refugees spent their time more than 75 years ago. I am re-tracing the journey of the Kladovo transport, recording the 'authentic' locations marked by their presence. Despite significant changes in the landscape over the intervening years, I am hoping to evoke through the camera lens the 'bones of the land' (Tilley 1994) grasping the specificity of the places once inhabited or glanced at by the Jewish refugees from the Kladovo transport. Using long shots of these spaces that are now largely uninhabited, the camera signals the slow passage of time and the absence of the members of people – implying the members of the Kladovo transport. This videographic record is evidence of 'having been there', but as Godard points out – only 'after the deed' (in Ranciere 2006, see also Bazin 2005). However, while the long duration of shots and the visual record of the places refer to the attempt to incite a sort of 'existential authenticity' (Rickly-Boyd 2013) through film, I am aware that my attempt to truly 'walk in the footsteps of the past' is futile and necessarily leads to failure to stand for/represent the journey of the Kladovo transport.

Nonetheless, through my own gaze and physical presence in and of the landscapes once inhabited by the members of the Kladovo transport as manifested through film and through

my writing, I intervene in and transform 'the past'. Using the camera as my main research tool, I argue – alongside philosophers of film such as Alexandre Astruc (1992) and Gilles Deleuze (1989, 1997) – that the potential of audio-visual media lies in its ability to essay movement, duration, place and space and materiality. In other words, more than seeking to describe the landscape in which the journey took place, I seek to explore how the physicality of that landscape was interwoven into the travellers' experience of the journey.

This personalized scope of the environment implies embodied experience not only of the passengers from the Kladovo transport at the time, but also my own experience, as a researcher visiting and filming the same locations. These two very different positions in time – the one of the refugees nearly 80 years ago and my own in the present – share (albeit very different) visceral engagements with the places and spaces of interest. While I can only make very limited claims of knowing what the (sensorial) experiences of the refugees were, my recordings through the camera lens represent a mapping exercise that positions our shared experience of the landscape. My approach draws from a body of knowledge that binds memory and landscape closely together. Similarly to historians like Simon Schama (1996) or Pierre Nora (1989) who foregrounded the interdependence between landscape/site and different memory practices, I aimed to describe how a place immerses us in history, bringing to life past events as living memory. However, both Schama and Nora draw a clear distinction between memory and history, indicating the immersive/embodied experience of the past as a matter of memory rather than history.

Contemporary historical scholarship, following the spatial turn, does not maintain this separation between history and memory, it re-frames our understanding of spatiality and its role in engaging with the past, with some writers referring to such engagements as 'memory practice' (Cole 2013). By employing quantitative – such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – and qualitative methodologies, the discourse around embodied experience of the past becomes a major component of historical analyses. For example, in the expanding field of Holocaust geographies (which I discuss in greater detail later in this study), examining experiential engagement with places and spaces of trauma, seems instrumental in identifying certain historical narratives that had previously been scarcely studied – such as the traumatic experiences of transports and transits during the Holocaust (Cole 2013, 2016; Giglotti 2009). With this in mind, and using the riverine discourse primarily related to flow,

rhythm and movement, I bring together the sensory experience of the landscape, as I conjecture it may have been witnessed by the members of the Kladovo transport, with my own experience of the same landscape now.

Editing

> …it is montage itself which constitutes the whole, and thus gives us the image of time. It is therefore the principal act of cinema. Time is necessarily an indirect representation, because it flows from the montage which links one movement-image to another. (Deleuze 1989, 34-35)

I started editing the material for *Two Emperors and a Queen* very early on in this project. As soon as I have gathered some of the sound and video material, I would experiment in the editing software with how to combine them. I was playing with/ manipulating chunks of movement-duration (Deleuze 1998), thinking about how and whether the meaning would potentially change if a frame lasted longer or shorter, thinking about the rhythm and the silences – the time within or between the voice-overs, as well as which image best correlates with what voice. Editing is a crucially important way of thinking through practice, and was instrumental for me in recognising the notion of temporality as the key theme that I utilise to build the conceptual framework through this study.

As the process of editing felt like working with externalised time (Doane 2002) and reflecting on the process of doing feels very relevant in this PaR context (Nelson 2013), I started considering ways in which I could make time visible in my film. Therefore, I started considering how to tell the story about the Kladovo transport, while at the same time, allowing the audience to engage with my way of thinking about time. While the discourse on temporality, as the central theme in this study, will be discussed in a separate chapter, in this section I would like to introduce and discuss some of the specific decisions that I have made in the editing process in order to show time, namely the split screen and jump cut.

The image in my film appears as a long strip across the single screen. The only exception is the very beginning of the film, when the photographs appear as three separate images on

the screen. Otherwise, the three, at first, and later the two screens are joined together in a single frame. This is slightly different from how Jill Daniels in *My Private Life II* (2015) or Chantal Akerman in *Maniac Shadows* (2013) use the three screens, leaving the black frame around, i.e. not allowing the three images to touch and entirely merge into a single image. In my film, however, I use the three and two screens sometimes as a single long horizontal stretch of moving image. This is inspired by my thinking about time and river, where the image appears as a flow across the screen. In this way, the boundaries between the screens are sometimes lost or barely recognisable. At other times, however, the distinction between the images is very clear and they are perceived as separate screens. At times the same footage is repeated in each of the screens, frequently with some time lapse between them (the same image does not appear simultaneously in each screen). These variations help put forward different ideas on time, which may appear as a single flow or as a number of fragments.

While arranging the footage into the simultaneous screens I was primarily exploring different rhythms. Furthermore, the split screen allows me to show the disparity between times and places in the journey of the Kladovo transport. This is somewhat different from the classical usage of split screen, of which the examples are many across all film genres: Abel Gance's *Napoleon* (1929), Michael Gordons's *Pillow Talks* (1959), Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977), Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991), Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), etc. to name but a few. Depending on the genre and the desired effect two or more simultaneous screens are used to show the action that is happening at the same time, or the disparity between the reality and anticipation (which is still simultaneous). Therefore, in either way, the split screen makes the particular and distinct reference to time which in most of its applications means showing one particular moment in which several parallel actions take place.

In contrast to this, artists like John Akomfrah in his three-screen video installation *The Unfinished Conversation* (2012), Jill Daniels in *My Private Life II* (2015) or Chantal Akerman in *Maniac Shadows* (2013) challenge the impression of simultaneity of the multiscreen projection. This is primarily achieved through the (relatively small) time lapse between the obviously same footage that appears multiple times. Instead of perceiving different things in potentially different places happening at the same time, we perceive simultaneously several

different points in time happening at the same place. As viewers we can respond to this in various ways. It can create a certain confusion. I would suggest that, in this way, the artwork emphasizes the temporal quality of the audio-visual media. As we step back from the narrative in order to understand what the media is doing or what is happening in fact, prompting us even to ask whether there could be a technical error. Therefore, for a moment at least we are no longer immersed in the story. On the other hand, this distancing from the story is a narrative tool in its own right; as we begin to reflect on and relate to the functioning of the media and how it distorts the time to the story that we are watching. This is the effect that I envisage in distorting the anticipated time flow of an image. Through it, I wish to make the audience of my film aware of time and wish to relate this awareness with the journey of the Kladovo transport.

I will return to certain specific details regarding the editing process later on in this writing, at the appropriate points of the narrative. In the next section I will discuss the opening sequence of my film as I would like to introduce my reader to my actual work process, including specific challenges and questions that I have encountered.

Beginning of the film

Figure 3 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Photos by Ehud Nahir. Courtesy of USHMM.

Visually, while listening to Aleksić's letter in the voice-over, the film opens with a number of archival photos that I obtained in high resolution from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington (USHMM). They predominantly show groups, either on board boats, in interiors and exteriors; doing something, like cooking and distributing food, or just posing for the camera. There are a number of photos showing smiling young people – these were mainly members of Jewish youth organizations for whom the journey to Eretz Israel was the Aliyah for which they have been preparing. Among the youth was Ehud Nahir, the original owner of the photographs (and possibly the main photographer), who, like Hilde Fuchs, survived the Kladovo transport as part of the group of 200 young people who were eventually awarded certificates for legal entry into Palestine. He kept the photos in an album that later featured in an art installation by a contemporary Viennese photographer Alisa Douer (figure 4). Apart from photographs, the album contained hand written captions and inscriptions in Hebrew, related to the places and people represented in the photos, and also included place names, like Šabac and Kladovo, written in Serbian Cyrillic. In her edited collection on the Kladovo transport Alisa included the whole album – as it was, without decontextualizing the photos from the ensemble.

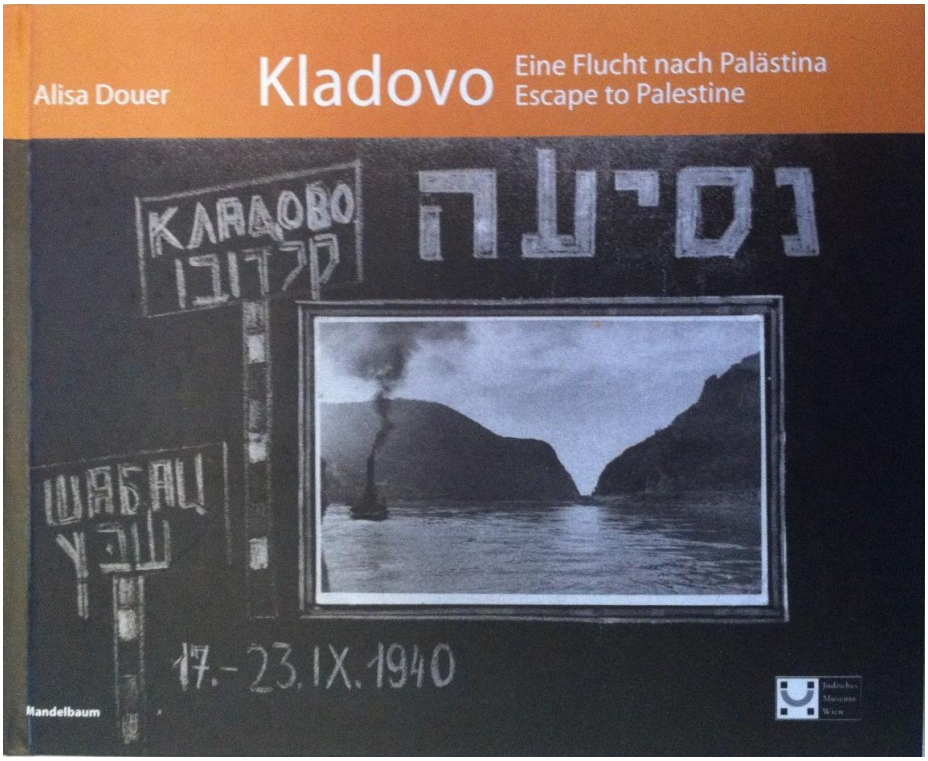

Figure 4 Cover of Alisa Douer's book and exhibition catalogue.

This is how I first saw them, the whole album printed and reproduced in rather poor quality. I was especially interested in a number of headshots – showing individual passengers, like Herta Reich, and decided to determine the whereabouts of the photos in order to obtain better quality digital copies that I could use in my film. I learned that the photo album (as a whole) was donated to the USHMM in 2000 by Ora Nahir, Ehud's wife (USHMM 2018). Although the museum was very efficient in sending me all the digitised group photos; despite my insisting and several emails – I never received the headshots that I was originally asking for, or a response to what had happened to them (according to the museum website, Ora Nahir's collection is available in the museum, if asked for 10 days in advance). Among the digitised photos, there are only two headshots; one showing Ehud Nahir and other one, Sime Spitzer, head of the Yugoslavian Jewish Community, responsible for the Kladovo group throughout their stay in Yugoslavia. Some of the other ones show two, three or four people; together with the remaining digitised photos, these could potentially be classified as group portrait photos.

Figure 5 Some of the headshots from Ehud Nahir's album. From top left: Ehud Nahir, Kurt Fried, Herta Reich, Daisy-Zeev's girlfriend, Leinwender-the gentleman, Mrs. Sklarek, Ruff-the president of the 'Clean Hand', Mr. Kummer-the aristocrat, Sigi Pfeffer, Mr. Sklarek, Mrs. Eger, Otto David-the ruffian, Haas, Trude, Ingenieur Wiesner-the soldier, Gottemann-the comfort-loving Jew. Captions/names from Douer (2001)

As someone who is essentially curating the photos by putting them in the film in a certain way, I am curious to contextualise my own choices within different memory practices related to this group of photos. In what way do the choices made regarding conservation and representation underpin consciously or unconsciously various socio-political, personal, ideological or philosophical standpoints; and how do these contribute to remembering and forgetting of the past? Ehud Nahir was the first to curate the photos, by assembling them into an album. The photos are both trace and imprint of the journey he himself had undertaken. They are organised chronologically, mirror his, first-hand experience of the journey of the Kladovo transport, and are an organic link between the time when he travelled and his later life in Palestine and Israel. His curating is a personal, intimate act of

dealing with his own past, rather than a wide historical narrative. I believe that Alisa Douer in choosing to show the whole album as part of her artwork responds to and enters into a dialogue with this intimate rendering of the past, that she does not comment upon, but exhibits as a ready-made; making in fact Ehud's tangible memory into an artistic medium for dealing with and remembering the past.

Although the USHMM still preserves the album, not as a ready-made, but as an archival artefact, its decision on how Ehud Nahir's photos are accessible to the wider audience online, i.e. which photos are digitised, shows very different memory practice to the ones exemplified by Ehud Nahir or Alisa Douer. As mentioned above, apart from two individual portrait photos, showing the owner of the photographs and one of the journey organisers, out of 262 photos that are in the album, only 39 are digitised and online. Only one out of the 39, Sime Spitzer's portrait, could be said to be a headshot, excluding 61 more in the album. Among other excluded photographs there is a number of landscapes, some showing the Danube, some pastoral scenes, showing villagers with or without their animals; there is also a quantity of photos similar in a way to the ones that are digitised – showing bigger or smaller groups in an activity or posing for a group photo. The choice of the digitised photos seems to be distinctly political – representing almost exclusively groups, sometimes with prominent Jewish elements (like a wedding in traditional clothes) as classifying the journey of the Kladovo transport within the Zionist context of immigration into Palestine. In this sense, photos showing individuals (as portraits) do not seem relevant and it is possible that they have been excluded for this reason. Furthermore, the politics behind the digitised photos also bring forth the broader question of what is imagined as a Holocaust photography (Buettner 2016; Gutner 2009).

My pursuit for high resolution photographs that could stand a quality test and be stretched on a large cinema canvas, made me face the socio-political and ideological undertone of the 39 photos that I had to choose from for my film. Although I had to give up my original idea of working with portrait photos, showing the Kladovo transport as a group of individuals, I find working with the choice of photos inherited from USHMM as working well and favourably with the wider concept of my film. The film aims to trace the journey of the Kladovo transport – as a group, and not any individual story of any of the passengers. Therefore despite, or maybe because, of the Zionist element that features in some of the

photos, I am able to condense information and communicate efficiently that the subject of my film is a group, whose journey was facilitated within a certain ideological context, but one that also brings to the surface the specific historical and geo-political moment of the Holocaust and the persecution of Jews. Escaping Nazi controlled central Europe, at this time, moves away from being an ideological choice to an imperative for bare survival. After all, although I am not showing the photos of individuals, individual voices are heard through the voice-over testimonies, as discussed above.

This makes my curatorial practice of showcasing Ehud Nahir's images distinctly different from the previous ones, although it draws from and incorporates elements of each of them. Firstly, it could be said that the way the images appear in my film resembles an album. Similar to Ehud Nahir, I am displaying the photos on a black background; while I am standardizing the display to three photos at the time, the number of photos per page in the original album varies (it is however interesting to notice that most of the headshots in the album appear three per page). Secondly, by quoting the album I am echoing in a way Alisa Douer's artistic engagement with the original artefact. Finally, even if reluctantly, I am working within the boundaries posed by the digital media and the geo-politics of memory at the USHMM.

However, the role of these photos in my film is more complex. Through film editing, they have been awarded duration, turned into cinematic images and animated in a way. Their meaning in the film is created and informed through collision with the voice-over of Aleksić's letter.

Furthermore, they help introduce and announce the idea of temporality. This is particularly reinforced through contrasts achieved through the juxtaposition of the audio-visual material - actual footage - that continues after the sequence created with Nahir's photos. I am contrasting archival and 'actual' footage, photography and moving image. This entails different temporal registers; instant (photography) and duration (moving image). Instant from the past (as it shows people and places recorded in 1939-41) and the 'present' of the moving image (relative present; footage recorded recently).

Photos from the beginning of the film show different things in different ways from the rest of the film. Visually, from archival photos showing groups, the film moves on to the footage

showing barely any people at all, and rather focusing on places. Empty space, entailing absences thus contrast the presences in the photos. Or rather, the emptiness of the spaces shown through the very static moving image is reinforced through the contrast with archival presences.

But before I expand on the theoretical discourse that underpins my practice, I would like to explore the historical background of the journey of the Kladovo transport in order to obtain deeper understanding of how this group of Jewish migrants happen to end up on the Danube waters in Serbia in the first place.

The Danube as escape route

The first large group of Jewish illegal migrants that is known to have sailed down the Danube was on a ship, *Daruga II*, which took its 'live cargo' all the way to Palestine, arriving there in December 1938 (Ofer 1990, 73). By the autumn of 1939, when the final plans for the departure of the group that we now know as the Kladovo transport were being set into action, the Danube was already a many times tested escape route from Europe and an important part of the pathway used for the illegal immigration into Palestine (Ofer 1990; Patek 2013). Defying the immigration quotas set by the British mandate government, especially restrictions set by the White Paper from 1939 (limiting the number of immigrants to 75 000 in 5 years, 1939-44) a number of Jewish organisations and individuals were involved in facilitating Aliyah Bet, the illegal immigration into Palestine (Aliav and Mann 1973; Anderl 2012; Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 2004; Avriel 1975; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013).

For many Jewish immigrants, 'Aliyah Bet' ('Aliya' – ascension in Hebrew) meant independent or alternative, as opposed to 'illegal'; it differed from 'Aliyah' which meant entry into Palestine with the legal certificates issued by the British mandate government (Ofer 1990; Patek 2013). 'Illegal' implies that the passengers did not have entry visas for Palestine, but, after, frequently legally, leaving their countries of origin in Europe, they would then attempt to enter Palestine without the required certificates. However, within the framework of the Zionist ideology, entry, seen as the return, to Eretz ('the land of') Israel was seen as the birth right of every Jew. It is within this context that the first 'illegal' journeys (although not via the Danube) across the sea took place in 1934 (Lahav 1982; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013). The

success of the first oversea transport was, however, succeeded by a number of failed attempts, which caused the decision to stop further actions for the time being (Patek 2013). However, organised illegal immigration resumed in 1937. The organizers of the first trips came from the ranks of Hechalutz and Betar (both Zionist youth organisations), rival groups dedicated to the Zionist ideals with camps across Europe where the youth was preparing for their future life in Eretz Israel (Ofer 1990; Patek 2013). With the rising power of the National Socialists, and especially after Austrian 'Anschluss' in March 1938, the attempts to leave Nazi controlled territories by any means became an ever more urgent matter for Jewish population more generally. Consequently, Hehalutz and Betar were joined by other organisations and individuals in setting a rather broad international scene for the Aliyah Bet (Anderl 2012; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013). Leaving Europe moved away from being an ideological choice to being a large scale attempt to flee persecution and, as it turned out, mass destruction. The preferred route for all the organizers to get to Palestine seems to have been across the Mediterranean Sea. The alternative was the entry via the 'Green border', mainly from Syria or Lebanon, which was more suitable for individuals then organized groups (Patek 2013). After the first sea voyages were made from Greece, the main departure points for the overseas trips moved to the Romanian Black Sea coast and thus required passage through the Bosporus to enter the Mediterranean (Ofer 1990; Patek 2012).

Within this network, and especially as means of getting to the ports on the Black Sea from central Europe, the Danube played a significant role. As an international water flow, naturally linking the central Europe with the Black Sea, the river became the favoured transit route for some of the organizers of the 'Aliyah Bet', like the Revisionists or Berthold Storfer (Anderl 2012). In the context of facilitating the river journeys, Storfer is particularly interesting. He was a controversial figure, being a Jew and one of the organizers of the 'Aliyah Bet', but he also worked with the Nazis - in particular, under orders from Adolf Eichmann, a member of the SS and the head of the Central Agency for Jewish Emigration (*Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*) (Anderl 2012). The German authorities in their turn saw at the time - between 1938 and 1941 (when the Nazi politics turned towards extermination) - that Jewish emigration from the Reich worked favourably with their ideology and politics; as it meant reducing the Jewish population in the Reich. Eichmann's

idea was to centralise and supervise the process of illegal Jewish emigration through Storfer. While Stofer did report directly to Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung, which made other Jewish organisers involved in 'Aliyah Bet' reluctant to work with him, he helped save 9096 Jews (Anderl 2012). He was also the key figure in negotiating prices and getting the ships from the DDSG (Donaudampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft - *Danube Steamboat Shipping Company*), which were indispensable for sailing down the river to the Danube delta and the sea ports of Sulina and Tulcea (Anderl 2012; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013).

In this setting, the Danube provided a blood line that was to aid the escape from the growing danger imposed by the Nazis. Unlike road-based travel, the river enabled the refugees to move towards their goal with fewer obstacles, such as transit visas and checkpoints. This greatly helped shorten the administration process and (thus the time) needed to set this kind of escape in motion (Patek 2013). However, in the rapidly changing geo-political circumstances of the late 1930s, the status of the river and the ownership over its flow (Coates 2013; Gorove 1964) were not clear. Nazi Germany did not recognise the international treaties on the Danube set by the European Danube Commission and the International Danube Commission, two international governing bodies. In fact, in 1940, Nazi Germany proclaimed unilaterally the dissolution of the European Danube Commission, which was mainly in charge of the Danube Delta. Also, the status of the Commission was already challenged, as, since August 1938 Romania started handing all the administration of the Delta (instead of the Commission – whose role was thus reduced). Therefore, sailing the Danube at the time when the Kladovo group was embarking on its journey in late 1939, was an extremely dangerous and expensive enterprise, dependant on the seasons and weather conditions, as well as borders and political struggle over who controls the navigation (Beattie 2010; Coates 2013; Gorove 1964; Magris 2001).

But while the macro-geographies were being decided on a large international stage, the micro-geographies of the individuals caught up in the scenery while attempting to save their lives, draw up different, more visceral maps of passing through and/or dwelling on the Danube's waters.

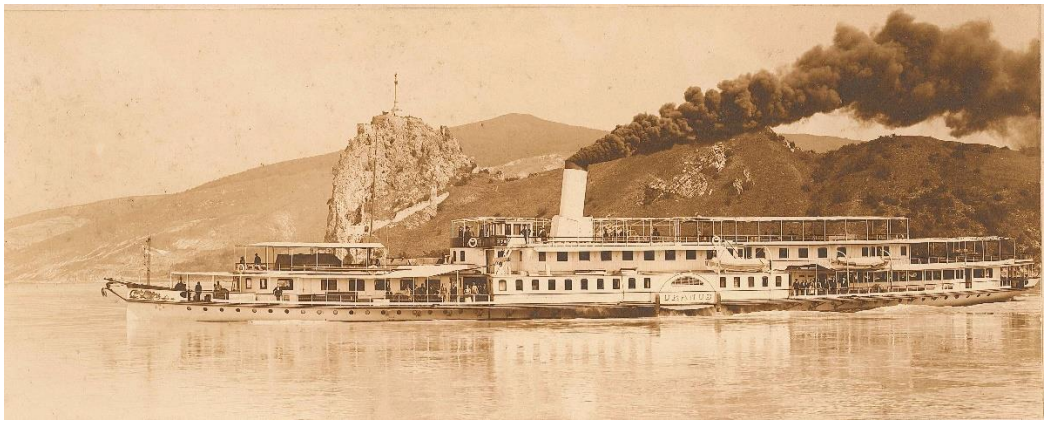

Figure 6 'Uranus'. Courtesy of DDSG

Setting the scene for the journey of the Kladovo transport

Unlike the other Aliyah Bet organizers, Mossad le Aliyah Bet ('Institution for Illegal Immigration', created in 1938 and officially established in April 1939), the organisation responsible for the journey of the Kladovo transport, was reluctant to send the passengers on the Danube. They saw river journeys as being less safe, despite fewer obstacles like border crossings, because they had considered it more difficult to move large groups of illegal travellers on the water with the necessary discretion. However, after the start of the Second World War in September 1939, caution regarding visibility was replaced with the growing urgency to move people away from the Reich (Aliav and Mann 1973; Anderl and Manoschek 2004; Avriel 1975; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013).

Ehud Avriel, Mossad's operative in Vienna and the main coordinator of plans for the journey of the Kladovo transport, secured (probably through Storfer) a river vessel from the DDSG. The ship called 'Uranus' was meant to take the whole group all the way to the Black Sea port of Sulina. The boat set sail down the Danube from Bratislava, but only reached the Hungarian border and was returned back (this decision was made by the company, not the Hungarian authorities). The 'Uranus' finally left Bratislava again on 13 Dec 1939. This repeated departure had to do with the refusal of the DDSG to sail the passengers all the way to Sulina without the confirmation that there was an overseas boat waiting to take on the refugees upon their arrival. They wanted to avoid the possibility of the refugees being stuck on board of their ship in Romania, which was already overcrowded with Jewish refugees hoping to find and board an overseas boat (Aliav and Mann 1973). As there was no boat

secured for the group in Sulina at that point, the organizers had to re-evaluate the situation and come up with an alternative solution. Finally an agreement was reached with the Yugoslavian River Shipping company to take on the passengers from 'Uranus' as soon as they crossed the Yugoslavian border, onto the three smaller boats rented for this purpose. It was decided to move the group forward, although there was no certainty over how they would proceed once they had reached Sulina (Anderl and Manoschek 2004).

The beginning of the journey from a passengers' perspective

While the organisers had to meet the logistics around the boat rentals and pay the required bribes so that the journey could finally set sail, the passengers were boarding the very crowded vessel:

> We were escorted to the Danube and crowded into an excursion ship. The former dining rooms, stairs, corridors and decks were all crammed with people. Everybody had roughly 40 cm space to sleep. I was somewhat luckier. I slept on a table; although it was a little wider it was only 1.2 m long. Two people slept under the table. (Reich 2014, 24; translated from German by T. Kador)

This is how Herta (nee Eisler) Reich, one of the survivors of the journey, remembered her accommodation in the overcrowded 'Uranus'. She underlines the lack of space by what seems to be factual information, mentioning the measurements, 40 cm or 1.2 m that rather point to the feeling of a confined space, than the actual, geometrical data on how the interior of the boat was shared amongst the passengers. By placing herself on the short table, which seems to have been a luxurious space in the circumstance, she evokes a visceral experience of the crowd, lack of space, being unable to move, especially as two people had to sleep under the table that she slept on top of. It makes it hard to imagine spending several nights in such conditions; on this 'island', the table surrounded by a sea of human bodies in the shell of the boat.

Among the other 'bodies' on board was Hilde Fuchs, who also survived the journey thanks to being part of a group of 200 young people who were awarded entry certificates into

Palestine (in early 1941). She remembers the first meal, or rather the effects of the first meal, on board ‘Uranus’:

> The lack of space and the overcrowding were enormous, and straight after the first "lunch" we all experienced severe diarrhoea. We were convinced that the crew had deliberately put something into the food. It was terrible, we all suffered from diarrhoea, vomiting, fever and stomach cramps.… The atmosphere on board was terrible, we were desperate and, longing for home, I cried myself to sleep every night. (Fuchs 2004; translated from German by T. Kador)

Hilde Fuchs does not try to describe the living conditions, she seems to speak quite literally in gut feeling. One could discern fear, homesickness as well as tears, extreme overcrowding and the sickness, a corporeal response to these new conditions. Her perception seems to be completely focused inward, to her own corporeal presence, foregrounding, by different means from those utilised by Herta, her body as the actual place where ‘it happened’. ‘Experiential space’, as archaeologist Julian Thomas described it discussing the human body as being more than a sensory apparatus (Thomas 1996, 87), expands from the physically sick human body to the overcrowded body of the boat. From the physical to the extended body of the riverine vessel, both their testimonies underpin the traumatic circumstances and conditions in which they were travelling away from their familiar lives, now filled with the growing uncertainty and danger.

Figure 7 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen.

I had originally intended to keep both of these quotations in my film – read by two different female voices in German. However, in editing I decided to keep only Herta's testimony. While I find it extremely interesting to be able to compare the two, as I just did in this writing, I felt that I had to condense the time in the film leaving out Hilde's voice-over. I am aware that instead of reading the testimony in English (as one can do in a written text), the viewer of my film will listen to the voice-over in German, while reading the subtitles in English and trying to grasp the moving image on the screen, before combining them all in a single meaning.

While I am considering the reduction of historical data and the limits of information that it is possible to put into the discourse of moving image as text, I am hoping to establish a meaningful dialogue between film and history. Instead of reduction I recognise opportunities in telling the history differently – not solely through text. Professor Desmond Bell and historian Fearghal McGarry, referring to Rosenstone, as the historian who discussed the relationship between history and film (Bell and McGarry 2013; Rosenstone 1988, 1995), identify techniques used by filmmakers in appropriating historical narratives: 'compression (several characters become one), condensation (where multiple events are conflated), displacement (moving an incident from one time or location to another) and alteration (where a character expresses the sentiments of another)' (Bell and McGarry 2013, 11-12) While I can recognise all of them in my work and am careful in balancing the accuracy of information communicated in my film, the cinematic discourse brings forth other elements, such as audio-visual stimuli that sometimes help condense the data into a multisensory impression – as is the case with Herta's testimony read in the voice-over. The richness of the multiple stimuli, and considering the rhythm of the overall film structure inform my decision to reduce the text in the film.

In the original script, the narrative function of Herta's and Hilde's quotes is to set the story unveiling from the passengers' perspective. In the film, Herta's testimony follows right after the Aleksić's letter; and is, in a way – the first response to it. As the film unfolds, the viewer understands that instead of hearing Gedalja (being the person to whom the letter is addressed to) answering Aleksić's query, one hears this female voice, speaking in German (after Serbian – language of Aleksić's letter, read by a male voice), about arriving on the overcrowded Danube ship. Together with the change in language, German – Serbian, and

gender, male – female, the image also qualitatively changes, from the archival photos that accompany the opening letter to the 'actual', recent footage (made for this film) of the moving Danube waters. In this way, the film viewer is transferred (in place and in time) to the presumably direct, first-hand experience of those who were embarking on this ill-fated Danube journey in the late autumn 1939. In a way – through the 'actual' footage and the direct testimony read in the language in which it was originally written - the audience is invited to see as they saw – or rather, to join me (as the author of the film) in imagining – how it could have been like to board an overcrowded riverine vessel and set sail through this watery landscape. Like this, I am colliding the past and the relative present of the image, inviting the audience to assume the passengers' gaze. The first person narrative will continue throughout the film, allowing the storyline to develop while maintaining the direct connection between the viewer and the testimony in the voice-over.

The narrative thread unfolds in such a way that each new testimony progresses the storyline in time, building on the basic structural timeline - the historical journey of the Kladovo transport 1939-42. The overall film structure is further complicated by the history of the Kladovo transport, as a multi-temporal event (which will be discussed in detail in different places in this study). At this point, I wish to underline some of the reasons that were guiding my decisions throughout the process of making the film, especially focussing of the script. I was hoping to keep the testimonies/ voice-overs as brief as possible, while still preserving enough of the factual data to allow the viewer to understand and follow through the story. I found most of the testimonies that I encountered while working on this project emotionally very strong and moving, in their own right; and therefore I did not find useful preserving the testimonies in the film based primarily on their quality as affect-images (Deleuze 1997). This is why, in choosing between the two quotes above in this chapter/section, I have decided to hold on to Herta's testimony, as, besides its emotional charge, it conveys vital information concerning the beginning of the journey – namely that they were boarding a ship.

III Temporality

The Itinerary

The journey of the Kladovo transport highlights several important questions relating to time and temporality, such as duration, rhythm, specific historical moments, subjective perceptions of time passing in transit, changing seasons, extreme weather conditions etc. Depending on how one positions temporal boundaries, this journey lasted for over two years – starting from November 1939, when the initial group of passengers was formed in Vienna, until the spring of 1942, when women and children were killed in a gas van in Belgrade. Therefore these roughly two and a half years provide the temporal framework that I refer to in my film. For some of the passengers, who managed to leave the transport and continue their journey separately, the escape lasted for longer. For example, for Herta and Romek Reich who abandoned the transport after World War II started in Yugoslavia in April 1941, and continued their escape independently, with several friends and Romek's brother, the peril lasted until 1943, when they reached a refugee camp in Bari, Italy. They only reached Palestine in 1944 (Reich 2014), which, for Herta Reich, meant 5 years of travel since she left her birth town of Mürzzuschlag in Austria; this is without considering her previous, failed, escape attempt via central and north-west Europe that ended with her returning to Austria in 1939, sometime before she joined the Kladovo transport (Reich 2014). Others, even if they would manage to obtain legal certificates to enter Palestine, would be interned in detainee camps like Atlit for various amounts of time, before being released.

The paradox of the journey of the Kladovo transport is that, despite it being referred to as a journey or a transport, it was dominated by prolonged periods of stasis, rather than movement. The amount of time the passengers spent moving was extremely limited. They effectively only travelled for 10 (not even full) days, while the rest of the time was spent in anticipation for the journey to resume. In this context, the period most difficult to endure seems to have been the almost six months, between December 1939 and May 1940, when the refugees lived on board three overcrowded ships, without the official permission to go on shore for more than an hour per day. Even after the majority of the group moved on

shore in May 1940, they still had to wait another four months, until September 1940, for the continuation of their travel. This is when they embarked on another boat journey that lasted for about three days. While this in itself could seem like a rather long period of time to be spent on a boat, in comparison to the rest of their experience, this represents a rather short trip. This journey, upstream instead of downstream, brought them further away from their goal, as they were transferred some 330 km north to Šabac. This town, situated in the north-west of Serbia is where their persecutors caught up with them seven months later, in April 1941, when the Second World War reached Yugoslavia. In July of the same year, the members of the Kladovo transport were escorted from the town, into a concentration camp on the river Sava. The relatively short, 20 minutes' walk, between their accommodation in Šabac and the riverbank where the camp was situated signalled the end of the road for the Jewish refugees. Only two women, Anna Hecht and Dorothea Fink, survived the camps in Šabac and later Belgrade, where the women and children from the group were subsequently taken in January 1942 (Anderl and Manoscheck 2004). Although the journey of the Kladovo transport seems to have reached a destination – the concentration camp - that meant almost certain death for so many Jews across Europe at that time (Hilberg 2003), for the Kladovo group, reaching the camp still meant months of confinement, lost hope and immobility.

Throughout the journey, this frequent, frustrated mobility of the passengers sits in tension with the constant flux of the Danube (and Sava) waters. The river binds together and puts into context geographical locations as well as narrative standpoints. It could be said in the words of historian Simone Gigliotti, that for the passengers of the Kladovo transport the river becomes a 'cumulative itinerary of landscapes and traumatic geographies' (2009, 5). Far from being a fixed location, or a colourful backdrop of and in the historical narrative, the Danube is not only a place, but also a chronometer that sets the rhythm of this failed escape journey, both physically and metaphorically.

Theoretical framework: discourse on temporality

Because of these multiple registers of time that seem so prominent in the journey of the Kladovo transport, it is important to unpack the relevant discourse that will enable me to

discuss the complex layering of time in this historical narrative. I begin with a more general body of knowledge that considers different, and sometimes contradictory, ways in which thinking about time seems to be organised, including cyclical, linear, non-linear, rhythm, interval, universal, ritual, instant, continuity, duration, tense, succession, etc. (for example Adam 2004; Gell 2001; Griffiths 2000, Lucas 2005 , Thomas 1996; Zerubavel 2003). Then I move away to focus on the notion of temporality (rather than time). This allows me to prioritise the personal and embodied ways in which the passengers of the Kladovo transport experienced time. But equally, it also enables me to reflect on my own particular temporal standpoint – as a researcher in the twenty-first century – and my relationship to the past. In the first instance, temporality combines two main standpoints in this project; the historical narrative on the Kladovo transport and the cinematic discourse. Drawing on Tim Ingold's (1993) notion of 'taskscape', as a term that forges together time and physical engagement with the environment, I am interested in unpacking the temporality (or rather temporalities) of the Danube as a riverine 'taskscape' for the Jewish passengers, within a broader theoretical framework on time in relation to the physicality of places. This is pivotally important for my work, because it positions the discourse on landscape as an essentially temporal category. Therefore, before moving on to consider Holocaust landscapes (as immanently temporal) and the cinema as embodied experience of time, I will take a moment to consider what I mean by temporality and position it as the main theme in my study.

The Oxford English Online Dictionary defines temporality as '[t]he state of existing within or having some relationship with time' (Oxford Living Dictionaries 2018). This very broad definition could be approached with Tim Ingold's observations on what temporality is not: 'It is not chronology (as opposed to history), and it is not history (as opposed to chronology).' He then explains, '[b]y chronology, I mean any regular system of dated time intervals, in which events are said to have taken place. By history, I mean any series of events which may be dated in time according to their occurrence in one or another chronological interval' (Ingold 1993, 156). Both of these time registers, chronology and history (in the way Ingold defines them here), refer to clock or calendar time – without engaging with a personal perception of time. He thus uses temporality as the term that allows discussing different personalized registers of time, emphasizing embodied time. In

contrast to Ingold, for historian Francois Hartog, the term temporality underpins the exact opposite; the mechanical measurements of passing time (like a clock or calendar) (Hartog 2015). However, despite this difference in terminology, Hartog like Ingold, is primarily interested in the embodied experience of time for which he adopts the term 'historicity' (Hartog 2015).

Consequently, I employ the term temporality in a similar way as Ingold and in line with Hartog's use of historicity, as the way time is felt rather than measured, where 'the passage of one present to the next is not a thing which I conceive, nor do I see it as an onlooker, I effect it' (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 421). In other words, time is not simply experienced passively, we actively participate in creating the flux of time through what we do and how we respond to our surroundings.

While embodied and experienced time is central to (the notion of) temporality, time is also shared through people's joint engagement with their environment. More specifically, through the spatio-temporal aspects of the body in place, people share the tactile experiences of the physicality of the places and spaces they inhabit, in the time they spend together. It therefore follows that temporality not only expresses the subjective and personal experience of time of an individual, but also, and perhaps primarily, the social. However, the social is a mesh of multiple temporalities, comprising many individual rhythms and relationships to time that resonate together both in and across time (Ingold 1993). Moreover, '[s]ocial life, […], is never finished and there are no breaks in it that are not integral to its tensile structure, to the 'ebb and flow of activity' by which society itself seems to breathe' (Young in Ingold 1993, 160).

Considering the journey of the Kladovo transport through the social lens, where, following Young, the social indicates the 'never finished', open and thus continuously accessible, enables me, as a researcher, to find common ground with the passengers in the past. In the first instance, the shared experience of the journey as something that happened within a specific geo-political and temporal frame, allows me to tell the story of the Kladovo transport as a group, or in cinematic terms, as a single protagonist. I am however, conscious of ethical considerations that this may entail. In particular this links back to Bell and McGarry's summary of the ways in which film condenses historical data, which I already discussed earlier (Bell & McGarry 2013), and the danger of omissions or misrepresentation

of the individual voices who essentially give breath to the group. In order to avoid this, through my research, I have tried to learn and explore the many stories (temporalities) of the individuals who travelled as part of the Kladovo transport before considering their testimonies for the script. I have researched and am familiar with the individual narratives of all the protagonists that feature in my film, and am aware of how the segments of their testimonies that I quote in my film sit within the rest of their respective individual stories. Therefore, I was cautious not to misrepresent the individuals while at the same time appropriating their voices to speak for the group. While the individual testimonies provide indispensable insights into the temporalities of the Danubian landscape, it is the emphasis on the social ('taskscape') that foregrounds that perspective on the shared experience of the landscape. This in turn allows for that experience to be imagined, understood or communicated, not only among those who lived through it but also to those, like myself, who come later, and in some form wish to engage with the past. As a researcher, with a camera, and through my own embodied experience I am sharing the landscape, across time, with the members of the Kladovo transport and by extension with anyone viewing my film.

In addition to the central role of the social context within temporal experiences, the natural temporal rhythms of the environment also play a key factor. Seasonality of a landscape as well as particular historical moments are imbued in the physical properties of places and spaces (Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Tilley 1994, 2004). I am interested in landscapes as mobile and complex ensembles of multiple temporalities co-resonating in the same physical environment. 'Landscapes concern how people scheduled their daily routines – seasons affect the rhythms of work and play, and social time is implicated in the daily rhythms of work and play' (David and Thomas 2008, 38).

In this context, the continuous spatio-temporal movement of the Danube waters in this riverine landscape positions my interest in movement and mobility as registers of time. However, for the Kladovo transport, the river as a fluid denominator of passing time contrasts the stasis – the absence of movement – as the dominant feature of their journey. Instead of moving, time seems to stand still; or perhaps more accurately, while time elsewhere (like the river's flow) is moving on, the members of the Kladovo transport are standing still. This collision of different temporalities in the same landscape, where the

natural rhythms of seasons and water flow reinforces, by contrast, the harshness of the 'taskscape' that the Jewish passengers had to endure; having to sit still in a constantly changing environment, not knowing when they will be allowed to move on. It is in this light that I approach the Danube as a Holocaust landscape. Together with Simone Gigliotti (2009) I consider time and temporality to play a key role in attempting to grasp the effects, discourse and physicality of these spaces of traumatic journeys in-between destinations.

The Danube as a Holocaust landscape

Dr. Nándor Andrásovits, a Hungarian ship's captain and amateur cinematographer, filmed with his 8 mm camera some of his journeys along the Danube (Danube Exodus 2018). In 1939, as captain of the Hungarian cruise ship 'Queen Elisabeth' ('Erzsébet Királyné') he recorded a journey of a group of Jewish refugees down the river Danube, from Bratislava to Sulina, a Romanian Black Sea port. In July 1939, the Slovakian Jewish Organisation hired two riverine vessels, 'Queen Elisabeth' and 'Emperor Dušan', to transport 608 Jews, mainly from Slovakia (but also from Austria), to the Black Sea (Danube Exodus 1998). This journey happened only a few months before 'Emperor Dušan' was hired to transport the Kladovo group in December 1939. Andrásovits's video record allows me to imagine the dynamics between people who seem to be of the similar demographics like the Kladovo transport, in very similar circumstances. The film shows them while they are sleeping, preparing food, praying, dancing, posing for the camera and even getting married on board. However, travelling in July and August, instead of December and thus just before the outbreak of the Second World War (unlike the Kladovo transport who travelled during the war), this group reached Sulina within about one month of their departure and managed to board an overseas boat to continue onwards to Palestine. Although not without its delays along the way and other severe challenges (like 40 pregnant women on board, poor accommodation conditions especially on the overseas vessel, which was characteristic for this kind of escape journeys (Aliav & Man 1973), this was nonetheless a successful journey that reached Palestinian shores (Danube Exodus 1998).

The Hungarian documentary filmmaker, Peter Forgacs, appropriated and expanded this video archive into the *Danube Exodus* (1998), a documentary film that juxtaposes two

Danube journeys on 'Queen Elisabeth', both recorded by captain Andrásovits. The first shows the Jewish refugees mentioned above, while the second follows the journey of ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) who travelled upstream from Bessarabia to Germany in 1940. In the film, Forgacs identifies and acknowledges not only the origins of the archive footage, but he even names some of the passengers on board. The film brings forth the idea of the Danube as an international migration pathway and how it was utilised during Nazi rule. In the first instance, the river was an escape path for the Jewish population away from persecutions, shifting the general discourse on international migrations along the Danube into the river as a Holocaust landscape.

After October 1941, when Nazi Germany changed its politics, not allowing the Jews to leave the Reich anymore, the Danube, as a Holocaust landscape, changed from being a migration route away from Europe and persecution, to becoming both the site and the means of the mass killings of Jews. Several concentration camps, such as Saal (Germany), Mauthausen, Melk and Linz (Austria) or Sajmiste (Old Fairground), Belgrade (Serbia), operated on or near the banks of the Danube. Moreover, in January 1942 around 4000 people (Jews and Serbs) were killed by Hungarian troops and thrown into the icy and partially frozen river in Novi Sad (in present day Serbia but part of Hungary and called Ujvidek at the time; Coates 2013; Cole 2016). This could be seen as a prelude to the mass killings executed in Budapest in 1944-45, where an unknown number of people were thrown into the Danube; they were either shot before being pushed into the water or thrown in to drown, tied together with someone who was first shot (Cole 2016).

'The heavy materiality of Danube waters' (Coates 2013, 30) gets a new meaning during the Holocaust. As a transit route, the river calls for critical engagement with movement and mobility in relation to Holocaust trauma (Cole 2016; Gigliotti 2009). The 'hidden Holocaust' (Gigliotti 2009) on the rails, roads or rivers, in trains, cars or boats implies the spaces in-between the already recognised places of trauma such as concentration camps or ghettos (Cole 2003; Filipović 1967; Gutman 1982; Gutman and Berenbaum 1994; Kogon 2006; Koljanin 1992; Megargee and Dean 2012). Paths of transit (Cole 2016), as well as the vehicles used to facilitate movement and extermination – objects of transit (Gigliotti 2009), are witnesses of a particular kind of the Holocaust trauma. They seem to point primarily

towards embodied, personalised experiences of places and spaces of trauma, where the role of the senses seems particularly intensified (Cole 2016; Gigliotti 2009).

However, unlike the vast research on the destinations of the Holocaust journeys, and within the context of the growing field of Holocaust geographies (Charlesworth 2004, Cole 2013, 2015, 2016, Giaccaria & Minca 2016, Kaplan 2011, Knowles et al 2014) the scholarship on transit seems to have been rather scarce (Cole 2016; Gigliotti 2009, 2016). Both Simone Gigliotti and Tim Cole describe the extremely harsh conditions in cattle cars, in which people were transferred to the concentration camps, and which in a way became signifiers of movement and mobility during the Holocaust (Gigliotti 2009). Although there were glimpses, there was no 'view from the train' (Keiller 2014), crowded into the confined space of the cattle car, people frequently were not able to sit down, because of the lack of space. Deprived of air, food or water while having to endure the stench of faeces, sweat and, in some cases, dead human bodies, these relatively short journeys were extremely traumatising (Cole 2016; Gigliotti 2009, 2016).

This brutal attack on the senses, emphasizes the human body as the actual place where the trauma happened. Displaced and disoriented people experienced movement (of the train) without the awareness of where they were or where they were heading, which further worsened the trauma. Survivors' testimonies give evidence that their attempts to address the places where they were, or were passing through resulted in describing how they were feeling or what they were experiencing. In this way, the experienced bodily trauma becomes a way to address the spatiality of the Holocaust, as the body becomes a site, a liminal space like roads and rivers – a place in between locations.

Trauma and deprivation in relation to experiencing the journey and movement more generally as well as displacement are extremely relevant in considering the conditions in which the journey of the Kladovo transport took place. Although ghettos or concentration camps were not the originally intended destinations of the journey, the passengers still had to endure extremely harsh living conditions that frequently resembled living in a camp or ghetto for very long periods of time, as it is exemplified by the six months they spent on board ships in the winter port of Kladovo. Testimonies, like Hilde Fuchs' that I quoted above, describe the confinement through the feeling of one's own sick body. Herta Reich also remembers:

> We got our drinking water from the ice from the Danube. Almost everybody contracted dysentery, lice and scabies.
>
> Our food was brought from the shore. That was organized somehow by the Yugoslavian Jews. Every day was the same: twice a day tea with schnapps, once noodles with plum jam, and alternatively with minced meat. People had scurvy, I had severe furunculosis all over my body due to the lack of vitamins. (Reich 2014, 41; translated from German by T. Kador)

This quote is another example of corporeal response to the traumatic circumstances in which the members of the Kladovo transport found themselves, especially during the winter of 1939-40. Illness and disease came as the result of literally consuming the landscape – as there was no other way of getting drinking water. The passengers, confined to the space of the boats, had to melt down the ice from the surface of the river. (Although, on the other hand, it is possible that the winter and the cold weather may have prevented a number of diseases from spreading further and Herta Reich reports outbreaks of Malaria, Typhoid and Polio during the following spring when the weather was milder.) While they were drinking the river, the food came from the firm ground – from the shore – where they were not allowed to go for more than one hour per day. The monotonous diet weakened their bodies further. They had no choice but to sit still while they were getting weaker, hoping that the time will move on and the season will change. In Herta Reich's own words, '[w]e were waiting. For spring, for a little bit of sun and warmth.' (Reich 2014, 41; translated from German by T. Kador)

Film as the embodied experience of time

> Indeed, the fascination of the film is that it does *not* transcend our lived experience of temporality, but rather that it seems to partake in, to share it. Unlike the still photograph, the film exists for us as always in the *act of becoming*. (Sobchack 1992, 60)

Figure 8 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Interior of 'Tsar Nikolai II'.

As the viewer of my film listens to Herta's testimony quoted at the end of the last section, where she describes the life on the boats, they are at the same time looking at the interior of the ship(wreck) 'Tsar Nikolai II', as it presented itself to me and was recorded by my camera in 2015 (figure 8). The camera is static, and the image, in split screen, shows the ruined inside spaces which were shared, more than 75 years previously, by the members of the Kladovo transport. Perhaps these were the exact spaces where they shared their meals after they were brought in from the shore? Were they melting the icy Danube water here? Although the film does not offer answers, the viewer is invited to share the questions with me as the author of the film. Instead of the answers, we are facing together an empty space, but still the space confined by the same physical boundaries, i.e. the walls, wooden or metal floors that were physically experienced by the member of the Kladovo transport.

Figure 9 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Interior of 'Tsar Nikolai II'.

But while I was physically there, on location and filming with my camera, for the viewer - the experience of the ship 'Tsar Nikolai II' is mediated through my film. Therefore, my embodied experience of the place comes from being there – where it happened – on the boat in Kladovo – the town that gave this group its name. For the viewer, however, the experiential engagement with the narrative happens through the film. From this perspective, I wish to look into film's physical qualities – as a set duration of time that delivers certain audio-visual material – and in what way it can inform an understanding of embodiment. In order to do that I like to imagine that I can bring the viewer into the landscape where I filmed, and will therefore look at the film as a landscape. Similar to a landscape, a film, as a time-based medium, provides a group of people (an audience) with a measurable temporal platform for shared engagement with its content. In this sense – sharing of time of the duration of a film (even though not necessarily in the same place and at the same time) is a social experience in a similar way as the sharing of an environment in the sense Ingold (1993) discusses it– only instead of physical space, in film, we are faced with the mediated or projected content.

Therefore, I am considering the measurable duration of time of the audio-visual material, to be a physical platform for a socially sharable experience not only *in* but also *of* time (implying multiple personal time registers that co-resonate). Furthermore, the shared content, although it seems intangible, allows us to think about embodiment as a way of engaging with it. Andre Bazin argued for the particular status that film has with 'real' time; when compared with other time-based media such as music and photography. While time in film appears as 'real', time in music appears only as aesthetic (Bazin 1958). Also, while he understands photography as the image of time, film is the image within time (Bazin 2005). This perspective highlights film's particular relationship with the lived, physical ('real') world

as well as suggests that the experience of watching a film is necessarily embodied, as the film is (and can only be) viewed from within time (from the position of time).

This phenomenological thread is picked up in more recent film theory by Malin Walhberg (2008), Vivian Sobchack (1992, 2004) and Laura U. Marks (2000, 2002), among others, and is of pivotal importance in understanding film in the context of embodiment. For example, Sobchack writes: '[Film's] significance is constituted in its emergence and existence to a world that is encountered through an active and embodied gaze that shares the materiality of the world and inscribes temporality as the concrete spatiality of the situation.' (Sobchack 1992, 62). Thus, she continues Bazin's argument in further stressing the physicality of cinematic presence as primarily temporal category. 'Embodied gaze' foregrounds the viewer's corporeal being in front of a screen as individualised experience of time in the physical world; or more precisely, as lived experience in/of the shared environment between the flickering image and the world of materials.

Focusing on discourses on time in documentary film Walhberg identifies time of the image, allegories of time and time experience, as three distinct ways in which time appears in documentaries. Furthermore, looking beyond the genre, she distinguishes two main problems between film and time that seem to complicate our approach to temporality in relation to cinema, namely; 'time-space meanability' and 'archive memory of film' (Walhberg 2008). Both seem to point to the problem of the liminal quality of cinematic media in which time is imbued with physical qualities. In the first case, time appears intrinsically interwoven with space and brings to mind Henri Bergson's concept of duration (la durée), where the evasiveness of time is grounded in our experience, and although perceived as/in continuous movement it consists in fact of succession of spatial fragments (Bergson 2005). In this sense, our experience of time directly reflects the way cinematic apparatus works (Doane 2002).

In the second case, the 'archive memory of film' (Walhberg 2008, see also Doane 2002), frames the discourse around film as being one of the 'technologies of memory' (Stiegler 2011). It refers to the capacity of film to store, preserve and reproduce on demand images of/from the past. The problem Walhberg refers to in this case is the tension between two tenses: the past that the image not only testifies to but also embodies, and the present which relates to our perception of the movement of the image, as happening right here and

now in front of us. Either way, in the words of Vivian Sobchack; '[t]he images of a film exist in the world as a temporal flow…' (Sobchack 1992, 60), and again, refer to time as the main coordinate in addressing the physicality of film.

While throughout the process of editing my film thinking with Sobchack and Walberg was instrumental in making me vigilant to the physicality of cinematic time, central theoretical discourse in imagining my film and deciding on camera frames and types of shots was Laura U. Marks' 'haptic visuality' (2000). Picking up Sobchack's ideas on 'embodied gaze' and combining them with Alois Riegl's separation between optical and haptic images, Marks explores the surface of cinematic images, as inviting a tactile engagement with film. In 'haptic visuality', the eyes 'function like organs of touch' (Marks 2000, 162). She suggests that: 'Haptic images… invite the viewer to respond to the image in an intimate, embodied way, and thus facilitate the experience of other sensory impressions…' (Marks 2000, 2). In this context, the physical experience of watching a film involves our sensorial engagement with the 'skin of the film', or in her words: '[h]aptic looking tends to move over the surface of its object rather than to plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture' (Marks 2000, 162). This conceptual framework was instrumental in expanding the focus on cinema and time with the exploration of cinematic image as a surface that enables the exchange between the viewer and the viewed.

Thinking about the haptic quality of the images that I am capturing with my camera as well as the role of the senses in watching a film is very important for my filmmaking process. I wish to incite the audience of my film to think about, or even respond through their senses, what it must have been like for the members of the Kladovo transport to partake in this journey. What was it like to live in confined spaces of these cold river boats for months on end, sometimes drinking the water from the river, with only two toilets per boat (and each boat had over 300 people on board). And later in Šabac, more confined spaces, constant anticipation to hear the news about when they will be moving on; then the loss of any hope, months spent in a concentration camp… Trying to imagine the frustration myself, in order to be able to communicate it to the viewer through the audio-visual means, I realized that I tend to film the locations from very close-up. Looking through my material, it is dominated by details and close-up explorations of the textures of the places. I would spend hours filming floors, walls, the ground, grass, and then, almost at the end I would capture several

establishing shots, in order to allow the viewer to orient herself in the space. By filming from a very close range, I create almost abstract 'photos', that dissolve constructive elements of places – making them into any-place-whatever (Deleuze 1989) – and face the viewer with the surface of spaces, once experienced by the protagonists in my film. Being detached from the location (through the close-up), the image offers the textures of the materials (wood, grass, metal) for the experiential engagement with the places. While this kind of reflection mainly addresses the image detached from sound or duration, I am curious to further examine the ways in which a film works, as a specific medium that involves more than visual perception, in order to understand how to use it to communicate to the audience the feeling of 'being there'.

Apart from discussing film as movement-image and time-image, Deleuze (1989, 1997) identifies 'blocks of movement – duration' as the main construction material in film (1998). Echoing Eisenstein's montage theory, he sees the meaning being achieved through the collision of sound and image as they coincide in time on the film screen. He refers to this process, characterised by the interplay between the disjoint of image and sound elements, as working with/through a 'cinematic idea': 'A voice speaks of something. Something is spoken of. At the same time, we are made to see something else. And finally, what is spoken of is *under* what we are made to see.' (Deleuze 1998, 16; original emphasis) This does not infer that non-diegetic sound is more 'cinematic' than diegetic sound, but rather that the specificity of having an idea in cinema (or having a cinematic idea) (Deleuze 1998), and not an idea in another medium or discipline, is thinking through sound and image as disjoint categories that create meaning when they collide, and when their respective ways of working synchronize into a whole.

In this sense, my idea on how to tell the story of the Kladovo transport is specifically a cinematic one, as I am interested in working with the tensions between sound (diegetic and non-diegetic) and image and turning those into 'blocks of movement – duration'; or in the context of this particular narrative, blocks of absence of movement – duration. For example, referring again to Herta's testimony, in which she talks about the living conditions on board (quoted above), it appears that the film juxtaposes the voice-over to the footage from the location; showing 'Tsar Nikolai II'. Apart from the voice-over, we also hear the noise of construction works. This is the actual sound from the location – as the shipwreck is situated

within an active shipyard at Kladovo. Although we hear it, we never see directly the source of the noise. The shipyard is identified in the title appearing at the end of that sequence.

Multiple temporal registers collide here. Firstly, there is a disparity between the text/ voice-over and the ruined uninhabitable inside of the shipwreck; I think about this as the difference between the past that the voice talks about and the relative present of the image. Nonetheless, the text explains the image in a way, as we realise the history of the ruin that we are looking at. But there is another level of sound. The non-diegetic noise of buzzing and clanking of metal in the background informs the image in an opposite direction to the direction of the voice. Although it adds a particular rhythm to the film, the noise interferes with any attempt to be fully immersed into the times that the voice tells us about, thus questioning the limits of approaching that past. Therefore, while the testimony evokes the past, the noise reinstates the relative present.

I would suggest that there are at least two possible readings or interpretations of the space that the audience could experience at this point; although they seem to be directly opposite I learned that they complement each other exceptionally well. The first one would be that the noise trivializes the image, pulling the place that we are seeing away from the aura of the past and finally making the location inert or 'any-space-whatever' (Deleuze 1989). This is in line with my impressions of the place when I first visited it with my camera. I wanted to turn the volume down in order to be able to contemplate the shipwreck of 'Tsar Nikolai II' in peace. I felt that it was bad enough that there was no sign or reference of any kind to the Kladovo transport on the site, even without the noise that just seemed disrespectful. In editing I decided to keep the noise in order to evoke my own experience of the place. However, after I edited this sequence and screened it for a small audience, I realised that although the noise may have the trivialising effect for some, it also adds very specific dimension to the site. Therefore, the building noise suggests that this is a very specific location with very specific things happening there. Instead of pulling the attention away from the story, it actually anchors the ship, and thus the film, at a very specific place (where the ships are in stasis) – the shipyard in Kladovo.

The temporal status of the cinematic image is further complicated by our perception of movement on screen. In *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* Doane (2002) argues that we

always tend to perceive the moving image in the present because we observe movement as always happening there and then in front our eyes. However, as Deleuze explains: 'It is not quite right to say that the cinematographic image is in the present. […] The image itself is the system of the relationships between its elements, that is, a set of relationships of time from which the variable present flows.' (Deleuze 1989, xi-xii). This 'set of relationships of time' in film is accessible through the relative present and the 'real' time of watching a film, but implies simultaneously all the possible temporal registers that feed into the image as a media text, thus shifting the discourse from movement-image to time-image: '…the subordination of time to movement was reversed, time ceases to be the measurement of normal movement, it increasingly appears for itself and creates paradoxical movements.' (Deleuze 1989, xi). Deleuze here describes the shift from movement to time-image in film, as it occurred in the complex socio-political setting after Second World War, within the context of cinematic modernism, and movements such as French Nouvelle Vague or Italian Neo-realism. These new approaches to filmmaking started creating pure optical and sound situations that signalled that our perception of time in film is getting more complex. The temporal tensions between different audio-visual texts and stimuli are resolved in a film only in the sense that the cinematic discourse enables them to coincide and co-resonate – to exist as tensions, while at the same time producing a meaning. Because of this, cinematic image moves between the present and the past, or as Pasolini saw it 'the present is transformed into past' by virtue of montage, but this past 'still appears as a present' by virtue of the nature of the image.' (in Deleuze 1989, 35-36)

In my study, thinking through the cinematic elements allows me to juxtapose and layer different temporalities; the ones inherent in the historical narrative, but also those that explore this narrative after the event (as I do myself by making this project). Therefore, the cinematic discourse facilitates gathering and organising of multiple temporalities, and provides me with a unique framework for engaging with them; as I feel that I am working directly *with* and *in* time. Furthermore, because I work with film I am conscious of time continuously (especially while also working against a looming deadline). My embodied experience of time manifests itself through the awareness of different and simultaneous time registers which I use as my primary material/matter.

Through the making of the film, I am setting and manipulating measurable units of time, like duration of the sequences (or of the entire film), for the audience to engage with the narrative. I am continuously thinking about the interrelations of different time registers and how they translate into one another. For example, the journey that lasted over two years needs to be fitted into roughly an hour of film; or six months on the boats into nine minutes of film. In this sense – I recognise the aforementioned distinction Bazin (2005) made between cinema and other time-based media, like music. I read Bazin's 'real' in two ways: as referring to the historical event, that took place in the physical world and the one hour or so of the actual duration of the film, that is lived by the members of the audience as they watch the film in the overall continuity of their daily activities.

But even more than wishing to understand the complexity of time in film, I realize that the discourse on time and temporality becomes the key theme through which I am telling the story about the Kladovo transport. Time is not only a given quality of the cinematic media, that features in my film tacitly, but something that I choose to put forward and explore directly in my work. In other words, I wish to make time visible. A lot of the decisions that I have made during the production of the film – like the use of split screen image, jump cuts and long duration shots – could be seen in this vein. In this way, my film wants to tell the story about a failed escape journey from the Holocaust, while at the same time reflecting on what it means to tell it, through film. I am thus creating a reflective and reflexive piece (Nelson 2013, Nichols 2010, Renov 2004) that simultaneously operates as cinematic meta-genre (as I am trying to expose the way film works) and historical account on the failed escape journey of the Kladovo transport.

In this context, through the senses and the flux of time, I wish to bring together the experience of movement through space (and stasis) as the experience of getting from one place to another as part of the Holocaust trauma (Cole 2016; Gigliotti 2009) with the embodied experience of time as it is perceived in film (Barker 2009; Deleuze 1989, 1997; Elsaesser 2010; Marks 2000, 2002; Sobchack 1992, 2004). I suggest that the moving image (as an embodied experience of time) is particularly well suited to map out the trauma of displacement in Holocaust.

Before I move on to consider specific examples from my own practice and the experience that I have gathered in this project, I will take a moment to look into cinematic representations of Holocaust. This is of relevance for at least two reasons; on the one hand I wish to consider my work in relation to these representations, and position it with an understanding of the debates around representability of Holocaust. On the other hand, I wish to develop the idea and the argument that the discourse around representing trauma of the Holocaust was in fact one of the important contributors to cinematic modernism and, by extension, to the emergence of pure time-image.

Embodiment and Holocaust representation

In the aftermath of the Second World War, and the cultural climate in the society that had to face great loss and destruction there was a growing concern around mediating trauma. From Theodor Adorno's underpinning of the Holocaust as the 'unspeakable' (1949), that ultimately set the idea that it is impossible to represent it in any media, the mere quantity of art works that address Holocaust in some way, encourage the discussions to this day (Friedlander 1992; Hirsch J. 2002, 2004; Hirsch M. 2001, 2012; Pollock 2003, 2009, 2013; Young 1997, 2000). Within the broad range of different artistic appropriations of the Holocaust trauma, because of its claims on the 'real' (Bazin 2005), cinema takes a particularly interesting stance. Jean Luc Godard claimed that cinema failed its (20th) century, because it failed to stand in for the 'real' world (which was its primary purpose – according to Godard, and in line with Bazin), giving the example of cameras' absence from the concentration camps (Ranciere 2006). Thus, camera, and by extension – cinema, failed to provide witness for the atrocities of the Holocaust. It is from this position, immanently linked to representing the Holocaust, that the discourse on failure of representation in relation to media, more generally, spread (Ranciere 2006).

Only one video is preserved that shows the actual 'act of killing' of Jews during the Holocaust (Hirsch 2004). The footage concerned is about two minutes long, which was recorded by Reinhard Wiener, a German soldier in August 1941 and depicts the Liepaja massacre in Latvia. It shows people being driven to the proximity of a ditch, then running into it and being shot. After the official Nazi ban on photo and video documentation, Wiener

hid his footage during the war, and it only found its way to the archives in the post-war years. Recordings of the concentration camps that we might be familiar with, like the *Death Camps* (1945) were made after the liberation of the camps, mostly by the Allied troops (Hirsch 2004).

Therefore, the overall body of cinematic/audio-visual work that attempts to show the Holocaust in some way was mainly collected in the post-war years (excluding the footage such as the one made by captain Andrasovits, as it does not directly show atrocities). It is worth noticing that the first post war films did not specifically identify Jewish victims, or a particular anti-Jewish context of the concentration camps. For example, Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog* (1955), one of the early 'Holocaust films' that was very widely viewed, mentions the word 'Jew', only once (and this does not seem to appear in the English subtitles at all). Equally there was no explanation as to the meaning of Star of David in the context of the identification badges (triangles) that had to be sewed onto the inmate uniforms. During the 1960s and 70s, specific anti-Jewish discourse was firstly recognised, and representations of the Holocaust grew into a massive cinematic archive, stretching across nearly all film genres, or arguably becoming a genre in its own right (Hirsch 2004, Haggith and Newman 2005; Kerner 2011). Holocaust films as well as countless hours of audio-visual recordings that address the memory of the Holocaust now preserved in the archives, could be seen as – or, standing in for– this failure of representation that Godard referred to. Either way, the discourse on failure of representation seems to be immanently present in mediating Holocaust.

On the other hand, cinema and its ambivalent relationships with, and positions in, time make it a particularly important witness to the Holocaust. Belonging equally to the present and the past, by the virtue of the complex layering of temporalities inherent in the cinematic media, as I discussed earlier, audio-visual records seem to be able not only to testify to the trauma of the past, but also to inflict the trauma in the present. Susan Sontag, for example, explores the effects of mediated trauma that she felt unexpectedly when faced with a photo from the Second World War (Sontag 1979). Addressing certain representations of Holocaust in the cinema, Joshua Hirsch suggests the term 'posttraumatic cinema' for 'a cinema that not only represents traumatic historical events, but also attempts to embody and reproduce the trauma for the spectator through its form of narration.' (Hirsch 2004, xi).

These films were thus looking for means to communicate trauma in such a way as to induce a more holistic, even corporeal understanding of a traumatic experience.

Similarly to the ideas around 'haptic visuality' (Marks 2000, 2002; Sobchack 1994, 2004), only from a different angle, mediating trauma brings forth the discourse around embodiment. In his analysis of Holocaust cinema Hirsch looks into the modernist discourse and into the 'films that straddled the boundary between avant-garde and mainstream cinema, and that used the cultural techniques of modernism as way of provoking a posttraumatic historical consciousness of the Holocaust.' (Hirsh 2004, xi). In other words, films that 'transform an involuntary psychological symptom into a voluntary aesthetic.' (Hirsh 2004, 20). He explains that trauma is primarily a 'form of experience' and therefore 'posttraumatic cinema is defined less by a particular image content' like a documentary or fictional image of atrocity, 'than by the attempt to discover a form for presenting that content that mimics some aspect of posttraumatic consciousness itself the attempt to formally reproduce for the spectator an experience of suddenly seeing the unthinkable.' (Hirsch 2004, 19)

As such, dealing with the post-war trauma (including Holocaust) fed into formal and aesthetic changes within cinematic discourse. Breaking from the continuity of the classical cinema, characterised for example by the smooth, invisible cut between frames, post war cinema introduced new features such as jump cuts or extremely long takes, that broke the sensory–motor scheme of earlier films and started introducing pure optical and sound situations (Deleuze 1989).

Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), perhaps the climax of this kind of approach to Holocaust representation, is a good way to illustrate how these optical and sound situations turn the film into 'a media-specific work of mourning' Renov (2004, 128). This nine and a half hours long film, that was made over the period of 11 years, stretches the film into an aesthetic witness. In Felman's words, '*Shoah* is a film about the relation between art and witnessing, about film as a medium which expands the capacity for witnessing' (Felman 1991, 40). In order to accomplish this, the film brings forth a large record of information that not only fed into the film but also created 350 hours of archival footage. In Lanzmann's view, however, *Shoah*, is not a historical film. [...] He argues that while there is knowledge in the film, its

purpose is not to transmit knowledge. Instead he suggested that for him the film is an incarnation and a resurrection' (Felman 1991, 47-48).

The way he describes his work on the film is full of reference to embodiment, and immersive ways of tackling his subject matter:

> I had no concept; I had obsessions, which is different [...]. The obsession of the cold [...]. The obsession of the first time. The first shock. The first hour of the Jews in the camp, in Treblinka, the first minutes. I will always ask the question of the first time [...]. The obsession of the last moments, the waiting, the fear. Shoah is a film full of fear, and of energy too. You cannot do such a film theoretically. Every theoretical attempt I tried was a failure, but these failures were necessary [...]. You build such a film in your head, in your heart, in your belly, in your guts, everywhere (Lanzmann in Felman 1991, 56)

He underlines how important it was to immerse himself into corporeal sensations and emotions, to understand corporeally what it must have been like to experience the fear and the trauma. In order to attempt to convey his own immersive experience he utilised the cinematic features in an interesting way. The film is full of extremely long shots, particular camera movements, especially long tracking shots through the empty space that make one feel like they are tracking something that is no longer there, i.e. the absences. There are also a lot of silences in the film that seems to envelop the witnesses' testimonies. Eventually the film seems to turn into a monolith of time.

Shoah incited different reactions among audiences. The main criticism of the film could be extended onto any representation of the Holocaust deemed modernist, which were characteristic for the 'first generation' artists (those who directly witnessed the Second World War). The attempt to evoke and create an aura of presence of the past is ultimately viewed as a way of finding a meaning to the atrocities, reconciling with the tragedy of the Holocaust, and providing some sort of consolation, which the 'second generation' artists (those whose parents witnessed the Second World War) strongly opposed (Young 2000). Although Lanzmann insisted that his film is about the present (1974-1985 when the film was being made), which is why he claimed he never used archival material, it is set to bring forth the effects of the past 'through the virtue of the moving image' (Deleuze 1997).

Because of his emphases on embodiment, and corporeal imagining of the film, Lanzmann's work is an important point of reference in my approach to the Kladovo transport. Although I do not tend to work through obsessions, it is important to imagine how the people must have felt at certain situations. I was trying to relate as much as possible to the feelings of frustration, cold, uncertainty or fear drawing from my personal experience or the experiences of people in my immediate surroundings. For example, despite never being a refugee myself, a number of my primary and secondary school friends were refugees from Croatia and Bosnia during the Balkans wars of the 1990s. Also, I was filming the locations relevant to the Kladovo transport at a time of the great influx of refugees from the Middle East; especially during 2015. They were traveling in the opposite direction to the Kladovo transport 75 years previously, but were still in a way moving along the 'Danube corridor'. At the time of my filming, the main parks in Belgrade had been turned into impromptu refugee campsites. As a result I was constantly reminded of the uncertainties and the closed borders that they had to face which also directly relates to the experience of the Kladovo transport, as well as the fact that the Danube remains to this day an active European migration route, although most movement nowadays takes place along its course rather than on the water.

Furthermore, another aspect making *Shoah* an important reference in my project is its topographical quality (Charlesworth 2004; Olin 1997). The long tracking shots that go back and forth engage the places and spaces and our knowledge about them in a particular way. Charlesworth suggested that the *Shoah* should guide a historian's gaze when approaching the spatiality of the past (Charlesworth 2004). The landscape plays a key role in the film right from its opening in the form of a scene on a river. It introduces Simon Srebnik, one of only two survivors from Chelmno extermination camp. As a 13 year old Polish Jew he was forced to sing for the SS Men while rowing a boat on the Narew River near the village of Chelmno. We see him in the film aged 47, on a boat in a beautiful landscape, on the same river, performing for the camera the songs that he used to sing as inmate during the war. His testimony describes how the ashes of the burned bodies of Jews taken from Chelmno camp and killed in gas vans were thrown into the river. The pastoral opening image (a man singing on a river boat) charged with this information evokes the river Styx. We realize the director's intention to explore the boundary between our world and the one carved into the memory of those who witnessed the Holocaust. Testimonies of those who 'have seen the

other side' will be our guide through the silence of material remains (or their absence) of places and spaces of Jewish suffering and death during the Holocaust.

The film thus, shows the river as a liminal space and a Holocaust landscape, which is of great relevance for contextualizing my own work on the river Danube within Holocaust representations. Although Lanzmann moves away from the Narew to explore other sites of Jewish suffering and death, the fact that he decided to start his film on the river made me consider the film as similar to the river in the sense of being a liminal space in its own right. As a result of these considerations and relating them to the earlier discussion on the physicality of cinematic time (Deleuze 1989, 1997; Sobchack 1994, 2004), I see the flux of time in my film as echoing the flow of the river; only the time flows but the camera does not move for the most part of my film (until the very end to which I will return to later). I have made the decision to use the static camera as a way of reflecting the absence of movement in the journey of the Kladovo transport. However, I think about the stasis of the camera always in relation to the flow of time, which is directly influenced by superposing the discourses on time and river.

But while Shoah provides a valuable reference as a cinematic Holocaust landscape, where time and camera movement are utilised in an interesting way, I look elsewhere, for the more recent cinematic representations, that engage more directly with the layering of time in their structure. Unlike *Shoah*, films like Andre Singer's *Night Will Fall* (2014) or Peter Forgacs' *The Danube Exodus* (1998) are predominately composed out of archival material.

Night Will Fall (2014) is essentially a film about a film. It brings to light a forgotten *German Concentration Camp Factual Survey* (1945), commissioned by the British Government with Sidney Bernstein as a main producer and Alfred Hitchcock as an advisor. The film was meant to gather evidence on Nazi atrocities, but finally was not released until rediscovered in the archive and reassembled by scholars at the Imperial War Museum. Being a film about another film, but without which the first film would have never been seen, *Night Will Fall* creates an interesting temporal whirlpool/ mise-en-abime. In a way it is also a cinematic meta-genre because it reveals the process of making the 'original' film and explores the wider historical context of its making. From this I take away as relevant in the process of making the film about the Kladovo transport relates to making a film about another film. Although the correspondence between Gedalja and Aleksic never got very far and they

never even got to the stage of writing a script for their film, I find their intention to make a film about the Kladovo transport very significant. Using the first two of their letters as a voice-over, I am bringing forth otherwise forgotten archival material that allows me to (re)create the meanwhile (between the 'now' of the filming and 'then' of the historical account) and add another temporal layer that involves the historiography of the journey of the Kladovo transport.

In the section about Holocaust landscape, I already discussed Forgacs' re-appropriation of Nandor Andrasovits' 8 mm footage made along his journeys up and down the Danube, and how it portrayed passengers possibly similar to the ones from the Kladovo transport. Continuing from that, at this point, I wish to further investigate Forgacs' work because of the way he plays with discourses on time in the layering of the cinematic strata. Images are frequently explained through titles that accompany them. These are sometimes very factual, explaining the provenance of the footage, or what or who the image shows. People are sometime identified by their names, like 'Rabbi Mojse Spitzer, a refugee from Vienna' (in the eight minute of the film), or 'the beautiful Magda from Vienna' (in the 14th minute). Titles are sometimes playful, guessing the conversation that was originally recorded without sound; sometimes quite long, covering most of the image. There is also a voice-over, which at times explains the historical backdrop to the journey and at other times quotes diary entries from some of the passengers. Finally, there is also a layer of music, comprising a soundtrack composed for the film by Tibor Szemzö. This soundtrack frequently seems to create the impression of sounds that could have been diegetic (would have been assumed as coming with the picture); like multiple voices praying, the sound of the ship's whistle, its steam engine or the paddle wheel. Their rhythms and pace seem to be picked up from the image.

I find this very interesting and relevant, because I read these layers as different registers of time, that are brought together through collision into a unique cinematic idea (Deleuze 1998). In an essentially opposite way from the one utilised by Claude Lanzmann, Forgacs combines these different approaches and interpretations of the visual material, i.e. sound, music, voice-over and titles making his audience experience the film in different ways at the same time, both intellectually and emotionally. I find it extremely useful seeing how these

different layers of information co-resonate, as I frequently felt that I am trying to combine elements that could not work together.

Unlike Forgacs, however, I have decided to reduce the amount of (historical/contextual) information communicated through my film. On the one hand I was cautious to avoid saturation, but, on the other, I was also thinking how the potential lack of such information would cause the audience to come up with their own questions, because of the unease created through the lack of explanation. By confronting the audience with the testimonies in the form in which they are preserved, without commentary that puts them in context and, by doing so, ultimately provide a form of assurance to the viewer, I aim to remove the safety blanket that this 'voice of god' approach provides. While during the process of making the film I was continuously questioning how much information would be just enough to provide the necessary storyline that the audience could follow through, I was always foregrounding my decisions in very detailed historical analyses of the events. In the next four chapters I will continue to expand on the historical research while also contextualising it within specific decisions that I have made in relation to how that particular historical episode features in the film.

IV Winter

Figure 10 Stills from Two Emperors and a Queen.

Down the Danube

After crossing the Yugoslavian border on 14 December 1939, passengers were transferred near Bezdan from 'Uranus' onto three ships 'Emperor Dušan', 'Tsar Nikolai II' and 'Queen Maria', rented from the Yugoslavian River Shipping company (Anderl and Manoschek 2004). The boat's captain in charge of 'Queen Maria', Sterios Andrucos, testifies in his diary that 'Queen Maria' and 'Emperor Dušan' had already taken part in similar journeys, facilitating the passage of Jewish refugees to the Black Sea (Jakovljević 2010). In fact, 'Queen Maria' had just returned from the Black Sea port of Sulina, where it left a group of 361 people on

26 November, who then and there embarked on an overseas boat (Jakovljević 2010). This time, in Bezdan, 371 Jewish migrants (part of a group of over 1000 travellers altogether) boarded 'Queen Maria' before 4 pm. Sime Spitzer, the head of the Yugoslavian Jewish Community, visited the vessel around 9 pm on the same day (Jakovljević 2010). Naftali Bata Gedalja, the secretary of the Yugoslavian Jewish Community, stayed on board with the group, living in one of the boat cabins on 'Queen Maria' (Gedalja nd). He was sharing with them the journey to and the stay in Kladovo, the unintended destination of their travel. Hans Klein, one of the passengers (and one of three men who got married on board), noted in his diary the daily progress of the journey:

> 14 December, midday [in the middle of the river] we are transferring into 3 Yugoslavian ships. 16 December 6 o'clock in the morning departing Vukovar for Belgrade-Semlin, moored there and submitted post. 17 December downstream Iron Gates to Prachovo (Yugoslav – Romanian border). 18 December Prachovo, loaded coal, wedding preparations. 19 December Wedding on the Mizrachi ship [Tsar Nikolai II], 3 couples get married, afterwards back to Dusan, big reception, with food, fruit, biscuits, in the evening invited by the captain, good food, he gives us the keys to his cabin No. 7 until 12 noon the next day. 20 December Prachovo very cold. 21, 22, 23, December Prachovo, in front of the ships Serbian farmers are offering their goods for sale (furry hats). In Prachovo until 30 December. (in Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 52; translated from German by T. Kador)

Prahovo was the furthest point on the Danube that the group ever reached. The entries in Hans Klein's diary, feature also in my film and evoke the passage of time in the space of the boat. They very briefly, note one or two key events of each day. What at first sounds like a dry report on the progress of the journey, becomes indispensable testimony of the life lived on board. Information that there were 3 weddings (one of which was his own to Lisl Berger) in which everyone seems to have participated, gives a very different picture from the one depicted by Hilde and Herta above. Crowdedness here seems to be festive, as the boats move towards a new life. It seems a different kind of journey; honeymoon with the picturesque rural scene that they, as the tourists on their 'cruise' observe from the deck. However, for the 20 December, the first day of his marriage, he only writes where they were

and that it was very cold. With our benefit of hindsight, the cold seems to creep in and sets a gloomy undertone to what was to come next. After waiting for a number of days for permission to enter Romanian waters, the passengers were refused entry because, once again, there was no oversea boat waiting to take them on board once they would reach the delta. Also, the Danube begun to freeze. Consequently, they had to return upstream, to Kladovo, where they were allowed to stay through the winter. Moving away from their goal, the little fleet moored in the winter port of Kladovo, just before the New Year's Eve, on 31 December 1939 (Anderl and Manoschek 2004).

For this sequence in the film I have used a series of photographs that I took, during my first research visit to Kladovo in the winter of 2012-13 (before starting my PhD at the University of Bristol). The images are animated to give a slight sense of movement. They were taken from a moving bus as I travelled down along the Danube, through the Danube Gorges, marking the borderline between Serbia and Romania. I was captivated by the beauty of the landscape and was thinking whether any of the passengers on the three crowded boats traveling on the 17 December 1939 noticed the striking beauty of the Iron Gates, given the circumstance of their journey. I was heading to Kladovo for the first time with the main goal to find and film the shipwreck of 'Tsar Nikolai II', one of the vessels on board which over 300 of the refugees lived for several months.

Tsar Nikolai II

Figure 11 'Tsar Nikolai II'.

Given the fact that it is the only surviving of the three vessels that refuges used on their journey down river, 'Tsar Nikolai II' (and its history), has become a site and subject of particular interest to me since I started working on this project. It is ironic to think about how the journey of the Kladovo transport, which was only one brief episode in the long history of this boat, seems to have predicted its final destination; the shipyard of Kladovo. Made in Germany in the late 1800s and purchased in 1898 by the First Serbian Royal Shipping Society (Serbian: Prvo kraljevsko srpsko povlašceno društvo; later: Srpsko brodarsko društvo - Serbian Shipping Society), the boat (58 m long and 6.8 m wide and capacity to take up to 700 passengers) started its Danube journeys. In 1915, during the First World War, it was sunk by the Serbian army. Found by the Austro-Hungarian army, the boat was repaired and returned under Yugoslavian authority in 1923. During the Second World War (after 1941), it was moved to Budapest, turned into a tugboat and its name was changed to 'Urfar'. After the war it was renamed as 'Split' and it was restored as a passenger boat, again under Yugoslavian ownership. In 1965 'Split' was anchored in Belgrade port as a restaurant (and allegedly a brothel), where it stayed until 1993, when it was sent to be repaired to the shipyard of Kladovo (Karović pers. comm.). This is where I found it still unrepaired more than 20 years later. This shipwreck (today it's only known residents said to

be a family of Aesculapian snakes) has been the main destination upon all my subsequent research visits to Kladovo with my camera. The other two boats had been destroyed, 'Queen Maria' in 1944 (during the Allied bombing of Belgrade) and 'Emperor Dušan' was scrapped in 1960 (Karović pers. comm.; Jewish Historical Museum).

Figure 12 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. 'Tsar Nikolai II' on Shipyard Kladovo.

Frozen Danube

Figure 13 Winter port. Photo by Ehud Nahir. Courtesy of USHMM.

The winter port, where the refugees spent the entire winter of 1939/40, on board the 3 boats, was a temporary shelter for the vessels and their occupants from the snow and ice. This was facilitated by a stretch of the river being guarded by a 'pusher boat', whose role it was to regularly break the ice so that it did not enclose the ships in the port. Although it has

not been possible to identify the exact location of this port, because the Danube shore has changed dramatically over the past fifty years after the human interventions that reshaped the river's course, especially through the building of the two Iron Gate dams (*Derdap I* 1964-1972 and *Derdap II* 1977-1984). The designated stretch of the shore for the vessels to moor in 1939/40 was about 1 km long, and had the capacity to accommodate 70 vessels (Jakovljević pers. comm.). Soon after the refugees arrived, another vessel without an engine was tugged in, to allow for some additional space (figure 13). Still, the living conditions were extremely difficult, as Erich Feier (Ephraim Lahaw) later remembered:

> These ships were excursion boats, but not suited to be lived on! There were six cabins: one was given to the trip leader, one for the ship's doctor, the others were used as hospital rooms. (…) On board of the ship all value(s) (systems) had to be freshly re-evaluated: The most desirable possession was a bench in the first class salon. (…) I can't remember whether we were assigned the places or if we had to conquer or hold out for them. Either way, only very few were able to sleep on a bench in the salon. A space on the floor was worth somewhat less but was still very desirable. We, the *Misrachi*-Youth, were at the stern. There were benches too, but not with velvet upholstery. The possession of a bench was worth something nonetheless, as some of us had to sleep on the cold floor. I didn't have a bench either and moved at night from one place to another (…). (Erich Feier in Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 59; translate from German by T. Kador)

In this ghettoized space on the river surface, despite sleeping on the cold floor, as Erich Feier testifies to, and the poor accommodation on the vessels, there were continuous attempts to organize the everyday life, and maintain a certain discipline. A Secretariat was formed and divided into separate commissions for various needs of the community, such as the pharmacy, organising acquisition and preparing of food, general warehouse, etc. Apart from Naftali Bata Gedalja, the representative of the Yugoslavian Jewish Community, there were several other designated persons responsible for facilitating the day-to-day life of the group. Each boat had a leader, chosen from among the ranks of the youth organisations, who already had some leadership experience. Emil Schaechter was responsible for the passengers on board Tsar Nikolai II, the most religious group who prepared kosher food. His brother Jozi (Joseph) Schaechter was the leader of Emperor Dušan's passengers; he was

electrician by trade, and also seemed to have been the main musician on board (Gedalja 1977). Jukl Dorfman, in his early 20s, and a school friend of Ehud Avriel (a key Mossad operative in Vienna and one of the main organizers of this journey), was the head of the group on Queen Maria (Anderl and Manoschek 2004; Gedalja 1977, Lebl 1997).

The passengers maintained some contact with their families all over the world via post; throughout the winter, post sleighs were taking their letters twice a week. The main contact with the Jewish Community in Belgrade, however, was the telephone. Every day, Bata Gedalja, accompanied by two of the other leaders of the journey, would walk the roughly 3 kilometres from the winter port to the town of Kladovo, and the Agency of Yugoslav River Shipping (Gedalja 1977). They would communicate directly with Sime Spitzer who, in his turn, was maintaining contact with the Mossad concerning the continuation of the journey. Although most of the time the news would be that there were no news and that they still had to stay put, receiving daily updates was important, as it may have provided some consolation in the otherwise remote and barely accessible location at which they were waiting immobile on the frozen Danube. As part of an inquiry committee, set to investigate the living conditions on the boats, Sime Spitzer visited the group, between 28 and 30 January 1940, arriving there on the post sleigh (Lebl 1997). Upon his return to Belgrade, he issued a report on 1 Feb, stating that the passengers are in satisfactory conditions. This view was not shared by another rare visitor, Rose Jacobs, one of the founding members of the American-Jewish woman organisation 'Hadassa', known for her humanitarian work and financial support for the Jews in Europe and Palestine. She came to Kladovo from Turnu Severin, the Rumanian town directly opposite of Kladovo; crossing the Danube in a fishing boat in March 1940 (Anderl and Manoschek 2004, Lebl 1997). In her letter '*Hausboot auf dem Fluss*' ('Houseboat on the river'), she states how shaken she felt after seeing the living conditions in this 'end of the world, in the no-man's land' (Lebl 1997).

For the members of the Kladovo transport, politically as well as physically immobilised, without the right passports or ability to travel by different means, the stretch of water between the Yugoslavian Kladovo and Romanian Turnu Severin was the unbreakable reminder of the deprivation of any right of free movement. Only for a small number of passengers this boundary was briefly breached during their stay in Kladovo; and this was primarily due to the great urgency. One of the youngest passengers, a 4 year old boy, was

suffering from *Otitis Media* (an inner ear infection) and required urgent surgery. There was no means to help him on board the boats or in Kladovo itself; Belgrade too was unreachable, because of the heavy snow. This would have meant transporting the boy in an open sleigh for over 50 km, to the nearest train station, and on to Belgrade by train from there. The alternative was found in the decision to transport him across the Danube to Turnu Severin, on the Romanian side and directly opposite, but much bigger than Kladovo. He was brought in the pusher boat (*Kajmakčalan*) that was normally used to break the ice around the winter port (Gedalja nd, Jakovljević 2010, Lebl 1997). While receiving medical care the boy spent about a month on the Romanian side, before he returned to the Kladovo side of the river on a fishing boat in the spring (Gedalja nd).

This episode, described in detail in Bata Gedalja's unpublished story 'Ramy' as a great humanitarian achievement, was at the same time an extremely expensive enterprise. This one crossing seems to have cost the Jewish Community of Yugoslavia nearly one quarter of the overall charges that they had to pay to Yugoslavian River Shipping for the entire period the transport used the company's boats. Most of the remaining three quarters of the price comprised charges for the rental of the boats for several months while moored in Kladovo (Lebl 1997). While other researchers have referred to this narrative in great detail in addressing the financing of the journey of the Kladovo transport (Anderl and Manoschek 2004, Lebl 1997), I wish to consider this discourse in order to further my thinking about the river during the winter. This very much overpriced 'excursion' emphasizes the firmness of the (icy) river, not only in the literal sense. It underlines the liminal but also the limiting quality of their position. The location of the winter port was such that it placed the boats to the side of the waterway. They were immobilised and not allowed to move along the river's course, but forced to move to the edge and then not to move at all. Yet at the same time the passengers could not disembark either, as they had no permits to go on land and thus leave the international waters of the Danube. The only relief from living on the boats was one hour per day that they were allowed on shore; the local police seems to have been sympathetic, allowing the children to play for longer as well as for football matches to take place on the shore. Nonetheless, the refugees had to sleep, eat and spend most of their days on board. This implies that the space that they were allowed to inhabit was in fact between the river, where they were not permitted to sail, and the shore in Kladovo, where

they were not permitted to disembark. This leads me to think about the frozen river surface as echoing in a way the immobilized flow of the anticipated journey.

While this line of thinking has been extremely important for my film, in considering the liminal quality of the river and the ways in which it relates to the position that the members of the Kladovo transport found themselves in, I do not show the river directly in the sequence relating to this episode. My choice of frames for this sequence primarily relates to the fact that I was not able to obtain footage of the frozen Danube that corresponded well with the overall aesthetic choices in the film. As the river surface did not freeze during the course of my film production, and I therefore did not have the opportunity to film it, my only possibility would have been to use archival footage of the frozen river. For this purpose I acquired archival material from '*Filmske novosti*' (Film News), a newsreel archive in Belgrade, which has several instances of the frozen river from the twentieth century. However, during editing I realized that using this material would work against the conceptual framework of my film and consequently I decided to exclude this archival footage. Despite not appearing on screen, the frozen river and the extremely cold conditions of the winter 1939/40 feature tacitly in my decision to immobilize the camera and thus to use solely static frames throughout most of the film and especially the winter sequence. The river does appear almost on the margins in several shots that are deemed to represent this segment of the journey, but instead of showing the archival footage of the icy river surface, the image of my film focuses on the boat, i.e. the shipwreck of 'Tsar Nikolai II'. While the icy exterior might have communicated well not only with the environmental, but also the geo-political backdrop of the narrative, I believe that showing the inside of the boat – as it appeared in 2015 – reflects more poignantly the experiences of the members of the Kladovo transport. After all, caught in transit, the Jewish refugees seem to belong nowhere. Forced to spend months in between places determined by macro-geographies, their experiences point to the vehicles, i.e. boats, as the actual places of shared traumatic experience (Gigliotti 2009). These big, immobilised extended bodies provided shelter for the refugees as well as the framework for remembering their embodied experience of being 'there', on the Danube. In addition to the very confined living space, the boats mediate their memories on the particularly harsh winter:

> The winter of 1939/40 was especially cold. The ships were moored on the Danube shore in [the] Yugoslavian [town of] Kladovo. We spent the winter on primitive ships that froze on the surface of the Danube. The water in several showers was also frozen. We got our drinking water from the ice of the Danube. Almost everybody contracted dysentery, lice und scabies. (Reich 2014, 41; translate from German by T. Kador)
>
> Then the terrible winter arrived. I think it was one of the coldest winters of this century in Europe (…). The ship had two symmetrically arranged cabins on the deck [upstairs]; "glass constructions". The temperature there was minus 20 degrees centigrade, if not even lower. We children were so hemmed in (in our freedom of movement) that we had to sit for hours upstairs in the cold of these cabins, as this was the only place on the entire ship where we could play without bumping into an adult on every corner. (Schatzker quoted in Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 59-60; translate from German by T. Kador)

Figure 14 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. 'Tsar Nikolai II'.

The memories of the long winter months by these two survivors many years after the war refer to their experience of the icy Danube. Herta's memory brings forth the lack of hygiene and the illnesses; bodies on the boat immobile, waiting for the shower. The ships she describes as primitive, they feel small, containers of diseases they have been trapped by. For Schatzker, a boy at the time, his ship (the ship that he describes) feels much larger than the one evoked in Herta's memories, although he mentions being hemmed in one of the small glass rooms, he still speaks of rooms and corners and that, however difficult, it seemed to

have been possible to avoid the adults. Although this meant subjecting himself to the freezing conditions and a little later he writes:

> The ship finally became a trap, a traumatising event, even for the children. The adults were sitting around irritated and apathetic, everyone in their own corner, shouting at each other. (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 96; translate from German by T. Kador)

These testimonies to some extent help imagine and answer the questions on how the passengers coped through the extreme weather conditions, and provide some idea of the life on board. They highlight that their memories of the place refer to the inside space of the boats rather than to a geographical location or landmark. They do not seem to look outside of the boats into the winter landscape. The immobility focuses them on the inside of the vessels, and by extension, on their own bodies being trapped, apathetic and traumatised by the cold and the lack of movement.

Figure 15 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. View from 'Tsar Nikolai II'.

V Spring and Summer

The spring may have brought some relief, or at least more favourable weather conditions. As it was getting warmer, in March, the little fleet was transferred from the winter to the 'summer' port situated much closer to the centre of the town of Kladovo, and the passengers were allowed on shore, assuming they had suitable passes. Kari Kris wrote in a letter to his mother his first impressions of the town:

> Here it is […] much finer than in the boring winter port, we are directly by the village, a small 'nest', and some of us, who somehow managed to get certificates of passage, have already been to look at it. This afternoon, I too was in Kladovo for two hours. Finally, after 4 months (incidentally, tomorrow it will be exactly 4 months) being able to stroll around a little. […] The whole of Kladovo isn't large, only a somewhat prettier main street, otherwise the side streets are very run down. Generally, the entire village is very different to German ones, already pretty oriental. Some shops, however, are relatively nice, and there are also some hyper modern houses standing beside the small ruinous dwellings.' (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 64-65; translated from German by T. Kador).

The two hours that Kari Kris mentions here, are probably the first continuous two hours that he had spent on firm ground since December 1939; the walk he was apparently very much looking forward to, as if he was allowed to stretch his legs after 4 months of sitting still; although he did not seem too impressed with the scenery that Kladovo had to offer.

Also in March, about 200 further people joined the initial group. Although the exact numbers somewhat differ between the various accounts (*cf*. Anderl and Manoschek 2004; Lebl 1997), all agree that the majority of them came from the 'German Reich'; and mainly Germany itself. However, these new arrivals also included a group of about 20 Polish Jews and about the same number of Yugoslavian Jews. The latter were members of the local Jewish organisations who, although they were not in the immediate danger at the time (Yugoslavia was not in the war until April 1941), they were devoted Zionists who saw this journey as an opportunity for their own 'Aliyah'. For this purpose they were given false

documents, identifying them as Austrian or German Jews. These new arrivals were not the first additions to the transport after it crossed into Yugoslavian territory. For example there was the family David from Belgrade, who had moved there from Budapest in the 1920s (Ofer 2007) and joined the now-called Kladovo transport in Vukovar (modern day Croatia). Together with all the other refugees, they spent their time on board the little fleet throughout the winter of 1939/40 and shared the destiny of the transport until the end (David 2017; Lebl 1997; Ofer 2007). Unlike the Davids, most of the other Yugoslavian Jews who joined the passengers in Kladovo during the spring of 1940, did not stay for long. Once they realised that there was no certainty regarding when the boats would travel further they dispersed and mostly went back to their homes (Lebl 1997).

Despite the melting of the ice on the river and its waters becoming navigable again, there were still no concrete plans for the transport to leave Kladovo and continue the journey towards the Black Sea. There were rumours about such plans. For example during the winter already, Sime Spitzer mentions in his report from 1 February 1940 that the Yugoslavian authorities had approved the passage of the Kladovo group via the land route to the Adriatic Sea, where, presumably an oversea boat would wait for them (Lebl 1997). However, this idea never came to fruition and was eventually abandoned.

At first it seems that many of the passengers related the anticipated movement with the changing seasons and the movement (melting) of the ice. In a way, it might have seemed 'natural' to continue their journey in spring. This is apparent from a letter that Walter Klein sent to his relatives:

'In any case we have to wait for the pack ice to pass and allegedly shall leave from here 14 days after it has passed. As the pack ice could start to move in c.8-10 days (if it chooses to), we can expect to depart in c. 3 weeks.' (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 99; translated from German by T. Kador)

However, this like several other rumours and suggestions about the continuation of the journey, that the passengers received, turned out to never come true. Being rather isolated from events in the remote Kladovo, the refugees were unaware of the scale of the efforts made by Mossad agents across the world to find possible solutions to their predicament. Mossad primary focus appears to have been on the acquisition of seaworthy vessels that

could be used for the transfer of illegal immigrants to Palestine. Specifically for the transport of the Kladovo group, they received a large sum of money – reported to have been 35,000 dollars (Ofer 1990) – from an American Zionist organisation for the acquisition of a ship called 'Vatan'. The acquisition failed and instead, still primarily with the Kladovo transport in mind, Mossad purchased another ship, the 'Darien II', in May 1940. However, this boat became entangled in the complex political negotiation between Yishuv (the Jewish Community in Palestine) and the British Mandate Government, which followed from a divide within the Jewish Community (Aliav and Mann 1973; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013). There were two factions within Yishuv that reasoned differently, while one was in favour of prioritizing illegal immigration – at any cost and by any means – and aimed to urgently get people out of Europe, the other thought that working with Britain (instead of against its politics and restrictions) would contribute to ending the war faster, which in turn would automatically help the endangered Jews in Europe. Practically, as the result of this conflict, 'Darian II' was taken from the Mossad with the promise that it would be returned at a later point, and offered to other groups to help with the war efforts (Aliav and Mann 1973; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013).

The refugees were stuck in Kladovo, until further notice. However, the changing seasons made nonetheless a substantial impact on the refugees. As the river became navigable again the three ships had to be returned to Yugoslavian River Shipping to resume regular river traffic, meaning that the organisers had to find alternative accommodation for the passengers. On 2 May 1940 the preparations for moving onto the shore begun. The luggage was taken down and about 650 people were transferred to a number of locations in town (Anderl and Manoschek 2004). The first ship to sail away was 'Queen Maria' on 3 May. 'Emperor Dušan' departed straight afterwards, but for some reason returned to Kladovo on the same evening and ended up being the last of the three ships to leave Kladovo on 18 May; with 'Tsar Nikolai II' leaving sometime between these two dates. Also around the middle of May, a tugboat called 'Penelope' (sailing under Greek flag) was brought into the port to accommodate the group that stayed to live on the river. This group, formed mainly from the younger passengers, was also allowed to build themselves a temporary camp on shore. The living space on 'Penelope', or the 'object' – as it was referred to - was refurbished

and made inhabitable between 21-26 May. A second old tugboat that housed another group of passengers is also mentioned (Anderl and Manoschek 2004).

Figure 16 'Penelope' and the camp on the Danube shore. Courtesy of USHMM.

The entire group, now counting around 1200 people, therefore, divided. One group was living dispersed across private accommodation, all over the town of Kladovo. The second, smaller group, remained on, or just beside, the river, on 'Penelope, the other ship or the nearby camp, for which the young refugees themselves had built the barracks (figure 16). The first group was offered the choice of whether they want to eat in the communal kitchen or be given some money so that they could purchase their own food. Also, the rules governing their freedom of movement, including time restrictions, were different for the two groups. The first group, who resided in private accommodation, was not allowed onto 'Penelope' until two hours prior to the planned departure of the vessel, once the journey would be continued (Anderl and Manoschek 2004). So, while the circumstances changed, the new circumstances essentially brought a restructuring of the ghettoized space in which the refugees' were confined, rather than removing it.

Spring and summer in the film

Despite of obvious historical relevance of this divide of the overall group into two and different accommodation that they had in spring and summer, I do not engage with it in the film. I have condensed (Bell & McGarry 2013) the visual information on the places relevant

to this period mainly onto several locations near water without showing the town of Kladovo. These places are also mediated primarily by a single voice – that of Herta Reich – to which I will return to in a later section. I have made my decisions on how to represent and address this part of the journey of the Kladovo transport in this way for several reasons that I will discuss here.

Initially, I was convinced that elaborating on the living arrangements in Kladovo after May 1940, in film would create confusion. I feared that explaining it through the voice-overs, which is how I decided to bring forth the narrative, would not have been sufficient. For example, if I would to juxtapose the Kari Kriss' quote from the beginning of this chapter in which he describes how he strolled around the town with Herta Reich's quote: 'We never went to the village of Kladovo, and that was not allowed anyway.' (Reich 2014, 43; translated from German by T. Kador), I would make the cinematic storyline unclear and confusing for the viewers. I was not interested in changing the style of the film in order to explain that there were two groups that had differently regulated rights of movement and access to the town and the river respectively.

Following from these considerations, I also noticed that, in the sources that I had available, there was no strong link between the members of Kladovo transport and the places or the local community in Kladovo. This was very different from Šabac, the town where the group was moved to in September 1940 (see chapter VI). While certain exchanges must have taken place, as even just a fraction of the sizeable group of Jewish passengers would have made a considerable impact on the small town of Kladovo, I have not been able to find any concrete evidence for these interactions in greater detail through my sources, or identify an address in town that I could visit with my camera.

There are however two locations in Kladovo that I was particularly interested in. Both were pointed out to me by Mr Ranko Jakovljevic, a freelance researcher with great in-depth knowledge of the history of the area. One features in the film, while the second one (a grave near Mulberry tree) does not. The first one is a possible, but probably unlikely, location where the younger members from the Kladovo transport may have built their camp. I am showing the footage recorded here in my film: as the split screen changes from three (which was the case in the first part of the film) to two images. The audience sees a place overgrown with high, dry grass and containing a large blue metal container; two black dogs

(probably a pup with its mum) stroll through the grass. I use the movement of the two dogs in the two separate frames to play with disparity of time, and thus contribute towards the overarching ideas on temporality. The same image appears twice, but the two frames are not synchronised. Although I am showing it in the film (figure 17), this is a very unlikely location of the camp as it was too far away from the river (at least 15-20 minutes' walk through the town), compared to the eye witness testimonies. As Herta Reich remembers: 'Life was taking place between the barrack encampment on the shore and the ship.' (Reich 2014, 43; translated from German by T. Kador). Thus she specifically identified the location of the camp on the river shore (figure 16).

Figure 17 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen.

The ship she refers to is 'Penelope' the tugboat mentioned above, here is how Herta remembers it; 'In spring we moved onto a Greek coal tugboat that was somewhat modified for us. The former coal storage areas, were turned into four-storey bunks. One could hardly breathe. I had the last space on the top. 50 cm above my head was the iron deck.' (Reich 2014, 42; translated from German by T. Kador). Therefore, for Herta, as well as for a number of other youths, the living conditions do not seem to be very different from their life on board the 'two Emperors and the Queen' prior to them being returned to their owner. They were essentially still living on the river, or in very close proximity. Because I would like to emphasize the importance of the river in the journey of the Kladovo transport, I have decided in my film to stick with this smaller part of the overall group of the passengers who still had to reside on or near the water. In doing so, I wish to signal that despite the fact that

they were no longer as restricted as during the winter, there was no radical change of circumstances; they were still on the river, immobilised and anticipating movement. Nonetheless, some seem to have been preparing already for another winter: 'We almost had nothing left to wear. The few remaining rags that we had left we were saving for the winter.' (Reich 2014, 43; translated from German by T. Kador).

Figure 18 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Danube shore.

On the other hand, while the circumstances stayed similar in the sense of the prolonged absence of movement, the riverine landscape had changed, leaving the Jewish refugees to face new challenges. As the ice thwarted, the people were left to dwell in the marshes on the Danube: '[b]eside the barracks there were large swamps. The first severely ill people were lying in the hot non-hygienic barracks. There were no antibiotics, just quinine against malaria. Some of the typhoid sufferers died. Those ill from Polio were sent in the hospital in Belgrade.' (Reich 2014, 43; translated from German by T. Kador). The warm watery landscape now seems to be crawling with new disease. This quote in the film is combined with the rather abstract footage that shows either water or swampy green and slimy immediate proximity of the water (together with a cat that coughs once), without any specific landmark that would signal a precise location (figure 18). However, in the earlier stages of this study, I was planning to combine it with the footage of a location of the grave where several members of the Kladovo transport who died of disease are said to have been buried; like the 'typhoid sufferers' that Herta mentions above.

Grave near mulberry tree

Figure 19 Location of the possible grave near mulberry tree. Photo by Vesna Lukic.

This is the second location, a place near a Mulberry tree behind the local high school, pointed out to my partner and me by Ranko Jakovljević during one of my research visits to Kladovo. Although I have recorded the site, I have decided not to show it in the film. Again, this was mainly because I decided to condense the narrative, while still keeping it clear and accessible for the audience. However, I would like to discuss it here in the thesis in some detail, as this location seems to be the only relatively firm ground in Kladovo that bears tangible reference to the Jewish group named after this town. While showing us (my partner and me) the site, Ranko explained how it is believed to be associated with the Kladovo transport. According to the testimony of Kladovo resident Marković Stanoje, in the 1970s some 'gold diggers' were digging on the site below the (present day) high school, which in previous centuries used to be part of the extension of the Turkish cemetery in the town. There they lifted a tomb stone, 'where two Jews were buried', about 10m north from a large mulberry tree and found two corpses with blond hair. Today the mentioned site, near the old tree, contains nothing but a small dip, still noticeable. It is possible that the remains discovered there in the 1970s are those of members of the Kladovo transport who died probably as a result of diseases that were spreading while they were living on board of the boats, in highly inhuman conditions (Jakovljević pers. comm.), which is supported by Herta Reich's memories and Ženi Lebl's work.

Ranko further added that there might have been more than two people buried on the site, under the, now missing, stone plaque. A local teacher in the nearby high school who grew up in Kladovo, also remembers hearing that there were 'Jewish graves', indicating a strong oral tradition about the burial site, and a probable source of information for the 'gold diggers' who decided to lift the stone (Jakovljević, priv. comm.). Further support for these oral accounts comes from Ženi Lebl's (1997) article 'The tragedy of the transport Kladovo-Šabac'. In a footnote she gives the names and details of three people who died in Kladovo; Trude Jung who died from Erysipelas ('red skin'), a boy called Engelmann and Perec Frankel who died from typhus on 18 August 1940 (Lebl 1997). Ranko tried to get the representatives of the Jewish community in Serbia interested in exhuming the remains, without success.

After learning the history of the site, I started painting it in oil colours on a large canvas (figure 20). It is a kind of a landscape painting, it only shows the surface of the ground, without the sky, horizon or depth of field. The perspective is such that it helps me focus on the ground - the surface of the site, rather than the context. I was not interested in making a document of the location, which I was also doing through photographs (figure 19). I felt that through this making of a cenotaph in paint, I was in fact engaging with the ideas on surfaces of art works as interface for communicating the temporality of the subject matter. Coming from a background in fine art, this painting exercise was a very important part of my process of thinking about the haptic qualities of the physical world. It made me aware of the ephemeral surfaces of the places; the surfaces that I was hoping to pierce with my (camera) gaze in order to unearth the 'bones of the land' (Tilley 1994; 2004). Surfaces are after all 'where radiant energy is reflected or absorbed, where vibrations are passed to the medium, where vaporisation or diffusion into the medium occur, and what our bodies come up against in touch' (Ingold 2011, 22). In the words of J.J. Gibson (1979, 23) surfaces are 'where most of the action' is.

Figure 20 Grave near mulberry tree. Oil on canvas. 153 x 122 cm.

I was then able to transfer my thinking through painting and broaden my approach to the screen-based media. As a practitioner researcher, I am first standing against the material evidence with my camera as a research tool. I am recording the surfaces of places and spaces relevant for my subject matter; for example the surface of the river Danube, which was the main escape route for the Kladovo transport; the surfaces of the boat 'Tsar Nikolai II' (both above and under deck); even the surface of the archival material, although it was mainly the textual information that I was after, the surface of (mainly) paper but also the text seen as a surface that needs to be pierced through in order to be understood. From the physical, tangible membrane of things to the screen as surface, I am exploring the interfaces that enable the exchange, a boundary and a link at the same time, between different temporalities. Surfaces offer a context for thinking about materiality in relation to process, flow, flux and movement. The tangible qualities of both the material evidence and its representation are important as they provide physical support for the flow of experience from the historical moment of the journey of the Kladovo transport, via my own experience of tracing this narrative and communicating it further, allowing the prospective audience an experiential engagement with the past. Therefore, while the act and practice of painting

made me sensitive to the layering of the matter in a place in a particular way, making a film made me think more about the ways in which I could transfer this engagement with the physicality of places through the experience of time. Consequently, I have decided not to include the painting of the assumed grave near the mulberry tree directly – as one of the outputs of this project, but to refer to it as part of the process.

Herta Reich

In the film, the narrative structure that refers to the time spent in Kladovo during the spring and summer of 1940 relies primarily on Herta Reich's testimony. Therefore, for this part of the journey, I am reducing the experiences of the entire group virtually to a single voice. Although I am aware of the possible alterations of the historical narrative on the Kladovo transport that this compression (Bell and McGarry 2013) may cause, I still feel that Herta's voice is a very powerful and poignant testimony to the time spent in Kladovo, that simultaneously brings forth a very personal and intimate experience and echoes the shared experiences of the group. Above, I already discussed my decision to focus on only one part of the overall Kladovo transport group in the film (after they disembarked from the three ships), because this allows me to point to the significance of the river in their journey. Here, I wish to expand on this by further analysing the text of Herta's testimony, and how it enabled me to develop several particularly striking images of the Danube. Her varied perspectives on the riverine landscape primarily help underpin the difference in experiences and the passage of time. In the previous sections I have already quoted Herta Reich several times. These quotes feature in the film and signal the perspective on the river, first as an 'icy hell' that they had to consume as drinking water, and then as a stagnant, swampy landscape full of disease.

Rather unexpectedly, as the film progresses, her next quote transforms the river into the most of romantic of landscapes:

> Spring and summer 1940 brought me more joy of living again and especially my friendship with Romek. During the day we swam naked in the Danube. The summer nights on the river were hot. We slept in the high grass on the shore. Two young people who lost everything. Every memory of then contains Romek's deep soul, his

> hope and bravery – the entire hot and happy summer by the river. (Reich 2014, 42-43; translated from German by T. Kador)

Herta, nee Eisler, met her future husband Romek Reich in Kladovo. He joined the transport in spring 1940 as part of a small group of Polish Jews, mentioned above. They met in this no-man's land without possessions – which seems to indicate – no history and no baggage – just two young bodies in love, without history and context.

Figure 21 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Danube.

This very strong evocation of being in love is then contrasted with an equally strong frustration. After months of listening to the rumours about the potential departure from Kladovo:

> There was no more mention of an onward journey. But there were news from Vienna that a large illegal transport from Vienna on the Danube to the Black Sea would soon depart. In the autumn we saw them pass us by. As my parents and my sister were on that boat, our desperation was indescribable. We couldn't make any contact with them, as the ship didn't stop. A lot of us had relatives on that ship. (Reich 2014, 42; translated from German by T. Kador)

In early September 1940, the Kladovo transport had the misfortune to observe from the Danube shore the passage of the last 'illegal' transport from the German Reich. This trip, organised by Berthold Storfer, was the largest journey of this kind, counting about 3500 passengers on board four DDSG boats: 'Melk', 'Schoenbrunn', 'Helios' and 'Uranus' (the

same boat that transported the members of the Kladovo transport from Bratislava to the Yugoslavian border nearly a year prior). They passed Kladovo at the beginning of September 1940 without stopping there (Anderl 2012; Anderl and Manoschek 2004). As Herta expresses, there was no way for the refugees on the shore to contact those on the ships, which caused great distress to some, as they had friends and relatives on board of the passing ships. Herta herself was especially affected by this as her parents and sister were among the passengers in Storfer's transport and there was no way to get in touch with them or see the family that she had left nearly a year ago (Reich 2014).

Upon reaching Tulcea, a Romanian port in the Danube Delta, the passengers from Storfer's transport were transferred from the four DDSG vessels onto three overseas ships - 'Milos', 'Pacific' and 'Atlantic' (Anderl 2012; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013). After an adventurous sea journey, all three ships reached Palestinian waters, but were intercepted there by the British authorities upon arrival and were not allowed on shore. Instead they were transferred to yet another (much larger) overseas vessel, 'Patria', as it was decided to send the refugees to Mauritius. The refugees, local Jewish activists, determined not to allow for the newly arrived refugees to be shipped away again, decided to sink the ship in order to prevent it to sail away (Anderl 2012; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013). They detonated a bomb and the vast majority of passengers managed to save themselves by jumping overboard, as was the case for Herta's parents. Unfortunately, her sister was among about 200 of those who were trapped below the deck, and unable to escape they drowned. Those who survived the explosion were finally allowed on Palestinian shore, but were placed in a refugee camp (Anderl 2012; Ofer 1990; Patek 2013). Herta learnt of the destiny of her family only much later (Reich 2014).

It is also Herta's testimony that announces in my film the group's eventual departure from Kladovo in September 1940:

> All hope in continuing the journey was finally extinguished when one day the president of the Jewish religious community from Belgrade came to explain that there is no possibility to continue. We were to be brought back some 200 kilometres to the town of Sabac, on the river Sava. At the time, nobody guessed the background underlying this misfortune.

> Instead of travelling a further 600 kilometres to the Black Sea, we moved again on two old, weak and shaky boats that took us 200 kilometres back. Half the way back that we had already travelled to get us here a year ago. (Reich 2014, 42-43; translated from German by T. Kador)

Leaving Kladovo

Figure 22 Kladovo transport on their way to Šabac. Courtesy of USHMM.

At the beginning of September, the organisers were finally urged to find any way possible for the refugees to leave Kladovo, even if that does not involve heading towards the Black Sea. The reason was fear of possible encounter between the Jewish migrants and ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) who were now being moved from Bessarabia and Bukovina to Germany - via the river Danube (Anderl and Manoschek 2004). Macro-geographical changes behind this decision were part of German – Soviet agreement concerning the exchange of territories. It was feared that the Jews immobilised on the Danube shore may come into danger. The solution was found and the decision made to move the group upstream, to Šabac, Serbian town in the NW, close to the border with Croatia, on the river Sava, Danube's tributary (Anderl and Manoschek 2004; Gedalja 1977; Lebl 1997). Despite Herta's quote above, Šabac is roughly 330 kilometres northwest of Kladovo, but still this is much less than

half way back towards Vienna. Nevertheless her statement serves to emphasise the extent of her, and other passengers', desperation with this significant setback.

In September 1940, the Kladovo transport was getting ready to finally set sail, leaving Kladovo, on board three large, old barges, dragged by tugboats provided by a Jewish ship-owner, Josip Deutsch from his shipyard 'Shultz' in Pančevo (a town on the Danube near Belgrade). The Jewish Community could not afford another boat rental from the Yugoslavian River Shipping and was grateful to Mr Deutsch to have agreed to take the passengers for free. What is more, Mr Deutsch offered to transport the refugees, also for free, from Šabac to the Black Sea, once an overseas boat was secured to finally continue the journey (Lebl 1997).

VI Autumn and another Winter

Figure 23 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Disembarkation point on the river Sava in Šabac.

On 19 September 1940 the transport was finally moving again, but in the wrong direction; this was a journey in reverse, north instead of south. After travelling for three days at a speed of six kilometres per hour over a distance of about 330 km upstream from Kladovo (Anderl and Manoschek 2004), the passengers arrived in Šabac, a medium-sized town located on the southern (right) bank of the River Sava, a main tributary of the Danube. Their arrival was witnessed by Mara Jovanović, a girl at the time, who saw this large group of Jews disembarking and being taken to their respective accommodations across the town. It was also recorded by a local priest, Grigirije Babović, in his chronicle of the communal life in Šabac.

> On Sunday, morning of the Nativity of Mary [21 Sept], a group of Jews expelled from Germany were brought on tugboats from Kladovo to Šabac. They disembarked on Monday and Tuesday, and already on Wednesday late afternoon they were all over the streets of Šabac. Some took private apartments but the majority was placed in warehouses that they rearranged for themselves. Their maintenance was paid for by Jews from all over the world. They came from all social classes, all professions and all age groups. They were brought here on the order of the Ministry. (Babović 2010; my translation from Serbian)

I am lending 'his voice' to part of my film, combined with the footage that shows the exact point on the riverbank where they disembarked, a place that I was able to identify with precision thanks to the guidance of Živana Vojinović, a freelance researcher from Šabac and the author of *Deca Avramova* (*The Children of Abraham*, my translation of the title), on the history of the Jews in Šabac (Vojinović 2015). Her help was instrumental for deeper understanding of the impact that the Jewish community (including the Kladovo transport) had on the social life of the town.

After disembarking, some of the passengers, who could afford it, rented rooms in private houses, however, the two largest groups – mainly the younger – were placed in a warehouse in Pop Lukina Street, and in an old mill in Janka Veselinovića Street (Vojinović 2015). Both places had a communal kitchen and several large dormitories that could accommodate more than 100 people each (Jovanović 1979; Vojinović 2015). The old mill housed the main communal kitchen; those living in private accommodation were able to take the food, prepared in this kitchen, back to their lodgings. The refugees had permission from the police to stay out in the town until 8 pm, and once per week until midnight.

Figure 24 Warehouse in Pop Lukina Street. B&W photo by Ehud Nahir. Colour photo by Vesna Lukic.

Straight upon his arrival, Kari Kris was hasty to establish certain 'normality' in his new place of residence.

> I moved on the evening [of 23 September]. At 7pm I arrived at my new quarters and by 7.45pm I was already on my way to go for a walk into the town. This was surely the nicest evening that I have spent in years. To go rambling around a town, seeing properly attired people, not only the ragged farmers and gipsies like in Kladovo […], that evening I was extremely happy.
>
> By 8.30pm I was already sitting in the cinema, watching a German movie with Heinz Rühmann, namely *Hurra, ich bin Papa* and at 10.30pm I arrived back home.' (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 120; translated from German by T.Kador)

Kari Kriss seems to have enjoyed his first walk through Šabac much more than a similar first walk through Kladovo several months earlier, which I quoted above. This account, from a letter to his mother, shows that he obviously enjoyed the more urban environment of Šabac, which was more similar to the ones in central Europe that he encountered in his earlier life. Unlike Kladovo, Šabac had several movie theatres; one of them was screening *Hurra, ich bin Papa*, a 1939 German comedy, directed by Kurt Hoffmann and starring the very popular German actor, Heinz Rühmann.

Figure 25 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen.

I have found and watched this film online and am using a short scene from it in *Two Emperors and a Queen*. In the split screen a scene from *Hurra, ich bin Papa* is juxtaposed with my recording of the streets in Šabac (figure 25). In this way, by quoting the film that Kari Kriss saw on the evening of 23 September 1940 next to a street view of Šabac filmed in 2016, I am hoping to show the film as a shared environment for the exchange of experience between different viewers at different points in time. Although I was watching the film at home in my living room, and Kari Kriss watched it on a big screen in a cinema (after several days of boat journey and just after he had arrived in a new place), and despite the 75 years that had passed, we were both essentially facing the same content.

Furthermore, I only learned about and watched this film because Kari Kriss reports that he saw it. I watched it without subtitles, and as the film is in German (of which I have only a very basic knowledge), I was not able to understand everything. To Kari Kriss, this film spoke in his mother tongue and he did not need subtitles. The plot is relatively simple to understand; Heinz Rühmann plays a rich and spoiled student who leads a careless life, goes out a lot and is surrounded by women. It all changes when he encounters a child with a note attached that says the he is the boy's father, which then starts to change him into a responsible adult. While I was watching the film, I could not help drawing parallels between Kari Kriss and the main character in the film. Kari was born in 1922 and was therefore only 17 when he embarked on the later called Kladovo transport. After the German *Anschluss* of Austria, in March 1938, he was forced to leave school. He then joined the Jewish youth organisation Betar, and was attending an agricultural *hachshara*; a training camp to prepare young Jewish people for *Aliyah*. His correspondence with his mother and sister during the journey of the Kladovo transport portrays him as someone who liked to enjoy life and especially the urban environment, as the above quote shows. He enjoyed reading and spent a lot of time in the town's library – which is obvious from one of his letters that I quote further below. In 1940, at the time when he arrived in Šabac, he might have been a student, like the character in the film, might have enjoyed a more glamorous, or at least more comfortable life; if he had not been Jewish or if only the circumstances had been different.

Therefore, for me, *Hurrah, ich bin Papa* was mainly about Kari Kriss and the striking disparity between the movie projection and his reality. I wish to underline this difference in the split screen image in my film, by juxtaposing the black and white image from the 1939 comedy

and the recently filmed street in Šabac. The audience of my film views on one side of the screen the romanticised careless character played by Heinz Rühmann surrounded by women, on his way back from a night in the town driven in his limousine by his private driver; all the passengers in the car, including the driver are whistling a merry tune. At the same time, on the other side of the screen, is a non-eventful, everyday street view of Šabac, where apparently nothing happens of great significance. This 'any-space-whatever' (Deleuze 1989) shows the banality and yet factuality of an 'outside' view, and is contrasted with the 'inside' view (even quite literally the outside and inside of cars) of a desired yet unattainable, glamorous world elsewhere that a cinematic projection can not only inspire, but also stand in for.

Accommodation in Šabac

Figure 26 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Old mill.

Despite the much greater freedom of movement that the refugees enjoyed in Šabac, compared to Kladovo, their living conditions could still be seen through restrictions and spatial confinement and thus ask for parallels with ghettoized spaces that were at the time (autumn 1940) already numerous across Nazi controlled Europe (Hilberg 2003). The coming of the Kladovo transport to Šabac, their dispersal around the town in the designated, yet mainly abandoned places could be seen to hold parallels to the place-making strategies of the ghettos (Cole 2003). However, as this process did not include the local Jewish

population, ‘ghettoization’ here is linked to the forced displacement and migration from their homes (on the grounds of them being Jewish) and grouping as a mode of survival. Their separation in the new place should be seen as conditional and was marked by their living circumstances; accommodation in communal and industrial places that were not in regular use, as well as difficult communication with the local population because of the language barrier and extremely limited access to any paid work (Anderl and Manoscheck 2001; Reich 2014).

Mara Jovanović gives her detailed recollection of the places and spaces that the Jewish refugees inhabited during their stay in Šabac (Jovanović 1979). This is, for example, her description of the old mill;

> On the ground floor… there were wooden bunk beds. Tables were stretching along the light long room. Refugees’ wardrobe was mainly packed in their suitcases under the beds. On the eastern wall there was something written in Hebrew. Few landscapes underneath the scripture were the main decoration. Near the main entrance into this room there was a big stove made out of tin barrel. Chimney was sticking out of the window. There was rarely any smoke coming out, except when it was very cold. Wooden stairs led to the first and second floors. The floor was always rubbed and clean. There was no heating in the whole building. (…)
>
> In the middle of the yard there was a stable that the Jews later adapted into a small ambulance. To the left and right in the direction of the gate there were shelters under which there were barrels for plums. At the end of the yard there were pots for boiling spirits. This space was now used as a carpentry workshop. In the middle of the yard there was a water pump, and next to it a weeping willow. (Jovanović 1979, 246-247; my translation from Serbian)

The level of detail that she gives here – in a publication nearly 40 years later (1979) – testifies to her effort and engagement as a member of the local community to get closer to her new neighbours, breaking the invisible social barriers. In doing so, she witnesses how the Jews transformed the places that they have been allocated in their attempts to organise their lives and adjust to the new conditions. Compared to the confined space of the riverine

vessels that they first had to endure, and then the barracks that they built for themselves, the places in Šabac were at least brick-built and signalled some sort of permanence. They had an address here and stayed at locations that I could still visit today.

Filming locations

Coming to film, I notice certain differences in places and spaces between Kladovo and Šabac. In Kladovo, despite the fact that – from May to September 1940 – a number of members of the Kladovo transport stayed in private houses or rather rooms rented from local people, there is very little evidence of interaction or deeper engagement with the social or cultural life of the town; I discussed this in greater detail in the previous chapter. Most of the refugees would probably have agreed with Kari Kriss' assessment of the town being 'oriental' (in Anderl and Manoscheck 2001, 65), underpinning the 'other' cultural sphere (Said 2003) from the one they originated from; European. In Kladovo – except for the possible gravesite near the mulberry tree – there are very few locations in the town that could be pinpointed today with accuracy as having direct relevance to the large group of Jews that received its name from it. The fact that the town of Kladovo changed as the result of building of the nearby Iron Gates dam 'Djerdap I' does not provide an explanation for what – at first glance – seems to disconnect the historical moment of interest for this study from today. The exception could be a monument dedicated to the Kladovo transport which was erected in 2002 on the river shore (figure 43c). I consider this, however, a constructed place, without an organic link with the historical journey of the Kladovo transport, which is why I do not find it to be of interest for my practice, and I do not show it in my film. 'Tsar Nikolai II' as a ruined, disabled vehicle that happens to reside relatively near to the location of the former winter port turned into the main destination of all my filming in Kladovo. Even here, rather than being interested in the location (belonging to an international shipyard run by 'Rhine-Danube'), I was more interested in the inside of the boat and in documenting the space (rather than place) in which the members of the Kladovo transport spent their time. Following on from this, my filming of (mainly the interior of) the boat was a place-making exercise – turning the (empty) space into a landmark.

Figure 27 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Šabac, In front of the Library.

In Šabac, on the other hand, my approach to filming the locations was informed by the awareness of the greater social integration, as well as the potential access to the addresses all over Šabac that can still be found today in an address book (or on Google maps). The Kladovo transport was welcomed by a small local Jewish community; there were more educational and cultural activities that they could engage in, so they seemed to be more immersed in the life of the town, despite the language barrier. There was a synagogue; the cinema 'Paris' was booked daily for several hours so that they could spend their time there; as a social space rather than for film screenings. The refugees had their own coffee shop, newspaper, two theatre groups ('Fenit' and 'Yiddish stage of the small arts') and regularly organised lectures on different topics. The library records in Šabac preserve proof of numerous titles of mainly German, English and French books that the refugees borrowed from the town library (figure 27 and 28). The town mayor was apparently very welcoming too. He donated one square kilometre of wood from his private forest, which was cut by the refugees and used for cooking and heating. In gratitude, someone from the group is said to have sculpted a bust of the mayor. Among the passengers from the Kladovo transport was also a former player of the German football team, Kurt Hilcovetz, dismissed from the team after the Nazis came to power and now travelling with his wife and two children (his third child was born in Šabac). Along their stay in Šabac, and together with few other members of the Kladovo transport, the local football club, Mačva, was happy to welcome him to its first team (Vojinović 2015).

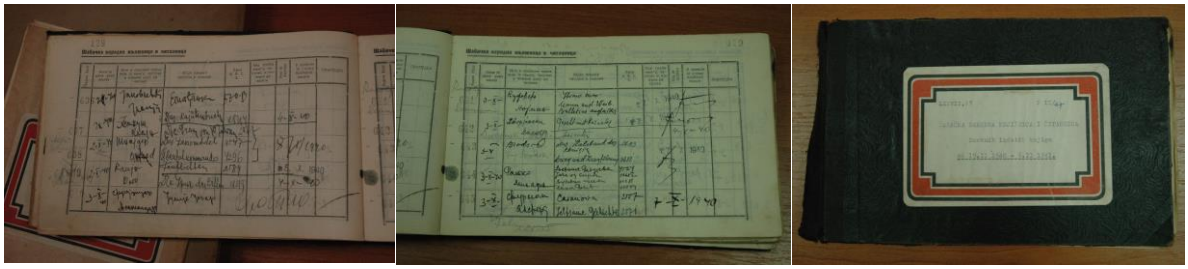

Figure 28 Library register. Photo by Vesna Lukic.

Kari Kriss, who was now living in private accommodation, describes his daily routine as follows:

> I usually wake up between 8 and 8.30am but tend to say in bed for another half hour (nice isn't it?). Generally, I'm the last one to get up. Then I go to the 'Magazine', that is a communal room, where the post is distributed. This takes until about 11am […] Afterwards I am in the reading room and at 12pm it's time for lunch. […] Straight after lunch I return to the reading room, then this is when the fresh newspapers arrive. When I have finished reading those, I go back home. There I either write letters […] or study English or French. From 4 to 5pm there are usually lectures, organised by our people's university and naturally I always attend those. I listen to anything, even subjects that I'm personally not really interested in. Yesterday for example, there was a lecture on the nervous disposition in people. Then from 5pm I generally stroll around, take a look what's new in the communal areas, or return to the reading room, if I haven't read everything that's available there. At 7pm we have to be back home. I spend the evenings mostly by reading or completing my correspondence. Thanks to the library, I have fortunately plenty of books (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 128; translated from German by T. Kador)

Figure 29 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Synagogue.

In the synagogue a school was organised with Jacob Rothman as the headmaster; he was teaching Judaica in the school that had 6 teachers and 30 students. As it was not possible to obtain school books in Hebrew, Rothman produced his own Hebrew school books by writing a new sheet every day that would then be copied by other teachers (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 126). One of his former pupils, Karl Schatzker remembers what a relief and help for the children and their parents this re-establishing of some sort of structure and discipline to their lives was:

> School was really a salvation for us. There was once again a routine. We had to be there at 8am and had four to five hours of instruction as well as homework. Even under the primitive circumstances, of which we were not really aware at the time, for us it was a school. The parents also took it very seriously and were glad that it existed. It was a significant deed, to establish a school in the given circumstances (...) Formal instructions only started in Šabac. In Šabac we children started a rather orderly life. (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 126; translated from German by T. Kador)

During the course of my filming the space of the old synagogue was changing, from a neglected, ruinous building under contested ownership into a fully refurbished Jewish museum that opened its doors in 2017. I managed to film the inside space while the renovation works were ongoing. This is arguably the only inside space that I show in my film that is not in a state of ruin, which could be seen to echo a level of hope that resulted from the slight amelioration of the living conditions that the Jewish passengers experienced upon their arrival in Šabac.

Figure 30 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Synagogue.

Anticipation to continue the journey

However, despite these efforts to integrate and maintain some sort of 'normal' life, the great majority of the refugees was still looking forward to the continuation of their journey. In November 1940, when asked whether they would prefer to stay in Šabac or continue their journey to Palestine, despite all the risks, almost everybody signed on a list that they would prefer to travel than to stay in Šabac (Anderl and Manoschek 2004). Like in Kladovo, new rumours of the continuation of the journey started to circulate. Again, announcements were made about prospective dates of departure, followed by disappointments because of cancellations. For example in the letter to his mother on 4 December 1940 Kari Kriss reports:

> So – finally the decision regarding the transport has been made: we are not going. The news came totally unexpectedly, as until the day before yesterday the departure date was set for 3 December at 3pm. It went even so far that all the luggage had to be submitted at midday on 2 December. Hence it seemed totally sure that we would depart on the 3rd. But then the day before yesterday came the unexpected news that the trip was to be postponed by 24 hours. And yesterday they told us that everything was off and the transport won't leave at all. People were like hit over the head. Almost everyone had bought food stuffs and tins. Some people even sold their suits in order to be able to buy food. And now we are all here without money and the transport is not happening. Thank god I was careful and didn't buy anything. (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 137; translated from German by T. Kador)

On the 11 December, however, Kari Kris writes to his mother again, saying that they will be leaving, but by train, yet this did not happen either. Finally, it was decided to spend another winter in Yugoslavia. The boat 'Darien II', which had been returned to the service of Mossad, waited for the members of the Kladovo transport in Sulina until 29 December 1940, when it had to sail off without them. The reasons why the communication around getting the people from Šabac to Sulina failed is still a matter of controversy. Some Mossad agents, reporting at the time, as well as some of the survivors, seem to put the blame onto Sime Spitzer. The records of the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade, however, show that there was no agreed transport for the refugees from the border of Yugoslavia, where Spitzer was supposed to bring the group to, on their journey to the Black Sea. This appears to be the

reason why he did not want to take the risk of abandoning some sort of security that they had in Šabac, for the sake of the risk of being stuck (again) somewhere *en route* where it would be impossible to facilitate food and shelter for the group. Weather conditions, the beginning of a new winter and freezing of the Danube were also factors, although other routes, like travelling by train were also mentioned. After the failure to get the passengers onto 'Darien II' in December 1940, all further efforts to get the entire group out were abandoned (Anderl and Manoschek 2004). The reality for the passengers was a second winter immobile in transit.

Against the hectic pace of the historical events, that in hindsight seem to unwrap with certain mutual causality, the present for the people stuck in Šabac in 1940-41 looked very different, as they were not granted full insight into the 'bigger picture'. In my film, the camera gaze stays with the gaze of the members of Kladovo transport, the rhythm stays the same, slow, and only subtly the hints implying the scope of macro-geographies come through the text. Therefore, at times, I hint at the historical events that were unravelling in the background, but I do not expand on them. My film is primarily interested in the passengers' experiences, and this is why I stay with the factuality of witnesses' testimonies.

I assume that for a viewer of my film who would not have the opportunity to read this thesis and does not have prior knowledge of the history of the Kladovo transport, the reduced level of information that explains the historical background to the story might appear frustrating. However, any frustration that the audience may feel because they would like to know more about how it was at all possible for the people to find themselves in such circumstances, adds to the overall experience of engaging with my film, as it provides the audience with the opportunity to realise and engage with the frustration of the Jewish refugees. I would like the audience to assume the passengers' position, rather than to reflect on the events from a comfortable historical distance. This is why I consciously try to reduce the level of information provided in the film, leaving the audience with the need to ask and to know more. Instead of attempting to provide information on the complex, still unresolved, circumstances that led to the eventual failure of the Kladovo transport to reach safety, in the film I use the townscape of Šabac to voice out some of the correspondence between parents, who were among the passengers, and their children in Palestine. For this

purpose I have conflated two letters that Martha Weinberger sent to her children. In the first one she writes:

> Dear Walter, it is you who I haven't seen the longest and I don't know if you have received my letters. I have been following with great joy how good, hardworking and studious you are, and how serious/earnest you have become. From Kurti, I have learned that you have in the meantime grown big and strong, a proper man. I was overjoyed about your picture. And believe me, the longer time keeps us apart, the more I am pining for you. (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 87; translated from German by T.Kador)

Martha Weinberger expresses her longing for her sons. Walter and Kurt, both teenagers who managed to reach Palestine in two previous *Aliyah* journeys, while Martha and her husband Emanuel got stuck with the Kladovo transport; they joined the transport independently, Martha only joined her husband in Kladovo in July 1940 (Anderl and Manoschek 2004). She wrote to her sons frequently, expressing desire for them to write more. In a letter dated 24 March 1941 (exactly two weeks before the Second World War reached Yugoslavia) she asks them to find a way to obtain legal certificates for them, so that they could leave Šabac and their current circumstances and find an alternative route to Palestine:

> We ask you most earnestly, my dears, to try everything, to help us to certificates. If it is not possible to organise a parent certificate for Walti, please inquire and work intensively to obtain another one for us. Otherwise, we have no idea what might happen to us, how much more time may pass and what else may be ahead of us. This transport is really a miserable affair. (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 172; translated from German by T.Kador)

From her words one can discern the growing desperation, but also the continuous attempts to find a solution, that is a way out of the position they found themselves in. I present the two letters together in order to allow the audience to engage with the growing nervousness and frustration that the people felt.

Following a different route, after realising that it would be impossible to get the entire group out of Yugoslavia, Mossad managed to acquire a number of legal certificates and 200 young people left Yugoslavia in March just before the outbreak of war, and the arrival of German troops, on 6 April 1941. Hilde Fuchs was among the youths who travelled by train through Turkey and Syria to Palestine, where they were detained by the British authorities; but their lives were saved (Fuchs 2008). Apart from these 200 young people and a number of refugees who managed to escape independently, such as Herta and Romek Reich, the remaining members of the group, including Kari Kriss, Martha and Emanuel Weinberger, became part of the 'final solution' in Serbia.

Figure 31 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Woman from Šabac (Vukosava Kostić?) running away from firing squad. [Available online at http://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/politika/1756394-uznemirujuci-foto-slika-koju-niste-mogli-da-vidite-u-knjigama-srpkinja-bezi-sa-streljanja-dok-nemci-pucaju-u-nju. Accessed 20 March 2018]

VII Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring

On a hot summer's day in July 2016, armed with my camera, my partner (as sound assistant) and I were preparing to shoot on location near the river bank in Šabac; there were fishermen mending their boats and kayakers paddling along the river. On land, people were seeking the cool shade of the large maple trees that are dotted around the parkland. There are several bars near the waterfront selling cold drinks to people sunning themselves by the riverside, children playing ball, passing cyclists and runners braving the heat. Nearby is the old fortress (Stari grad, literally Old town) which dates back to the period when Šabac changed hands repeatedly between the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires (Mendoza 2011).

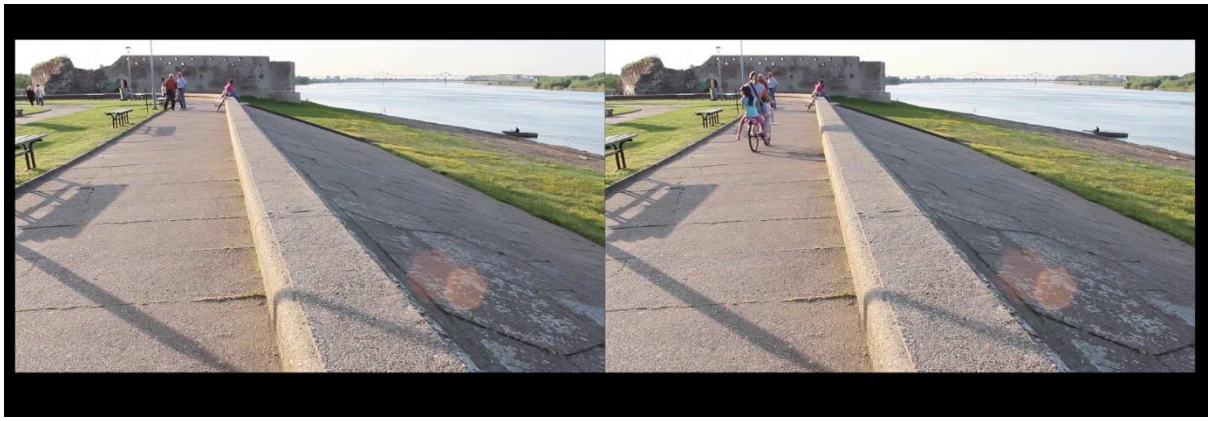

Figure 32 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. View at the old fortress.

This green space used by locals for leisure on the river shore, fitted between a police station and a military exercise area is the location of the concentration camp of which the members of the Kladovo transport became the first inmates exactly 75 years previously; in July 1941. While there is an information panel about the Ottoman era fort, there is no information that a concentration camp was located at this site. We were able to trace the canal that encloses the major part of the green space, and joining with a small brook, called Kamičak, would have provided the enclosing ditch of the concentration camp. The large trees that are dotted all over the parkland could be old enough to have witnessed the Second World War.

Figure 33 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Entrance to the camp on Sava.

In 1979, in her publication on the Kladovo transport, Mara Jovanović describes the transfer of the Jewish refugees from the old mill into the concentration camp on 20 July 1941:

> The following morning a few trucks with armed Germans arrived in front of the mill. The soldiers promptly jumped out of the trucks, and one of them, a junior officer, I guess, walked into the mill. Soon after, the Jews started taking out their beds and straw mattresses and loading them into the trucks. Finally, younger and stronger men loaded the tables and the stove into the last truck. Women and men, petrified, with rucksacks on their backs, were standing in line and waiting to walk to the camp. (…) Now, there is 500 people less in the street. (…)
>
> On the same day, 1107 Jews became the first interns in the camp on Sava. The camp was formed on the right bank of Sava, where there were military barracks before the war. The inmates adapted 6 wooden barracks so that they could stay there. The floor in the barracks was the bear soil, and the glass in the windows was broken, so the Jews nailed some boards over. The whole space around the barracks was fenced in with barbed wire.
>
> The barracks were 45 m long and 10 m wide. Each had two main entrances: one on the NE, the other on the SW side. From the outside, one would walk into a small corridor, and from it into two big rooms. On the other side there was the same floorplan. Besides the main entrances, each barrack had two side entrances. (…) Each barrack had its unwritten mark: first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth. Four

> barracks housed Viennese Jews, and two Jews from Šabac; men were separate from women and children.
>
> All the barracks have been torn down since (…). Only a drinking fountain/ well remains today, in the middle of the former camp.
>
> There were two entrances into the camp: from SW and SE. First was the bridge over Kamičak, used by German officers and vehicles; and the second, a wooden lifting bridge for the inmates. Both bridges were guarded by German soldiers. Through the middle of the camp a road led to camp's officials. On the other side of the road, closer to Sava, there were several buildings that sheltered pontoon boats; in the first building, close to the brook Kamičak, Germans kept robbed Jewish things. In the building next to it there was a kitchen, where the Jewish women prepared scarce food. In the third building there was a laundry and a workshop where the Jewish crafts/ tradespeople worked. To the right from the lifting bridge, the Jews dug the ground and planted autumn vegetables. (Jovanović 1979; my translation from Serbian)

This lengthy quote serves, not only to describe, but also to provide witness of how the refugees got from the old mill to the camp, as well as how the latter looked like and was organised. As it seems to have been possible for the inmates to leave the camp on occasions, for the first month or so (Anderl and Manoschek 2014; Jovanović 1979), Mara would meet some of her former Jewish neighbours in the town and they would tell her about their life in the camp; which is why she was aware of so many details on what the camp looked like, even then, during the war.

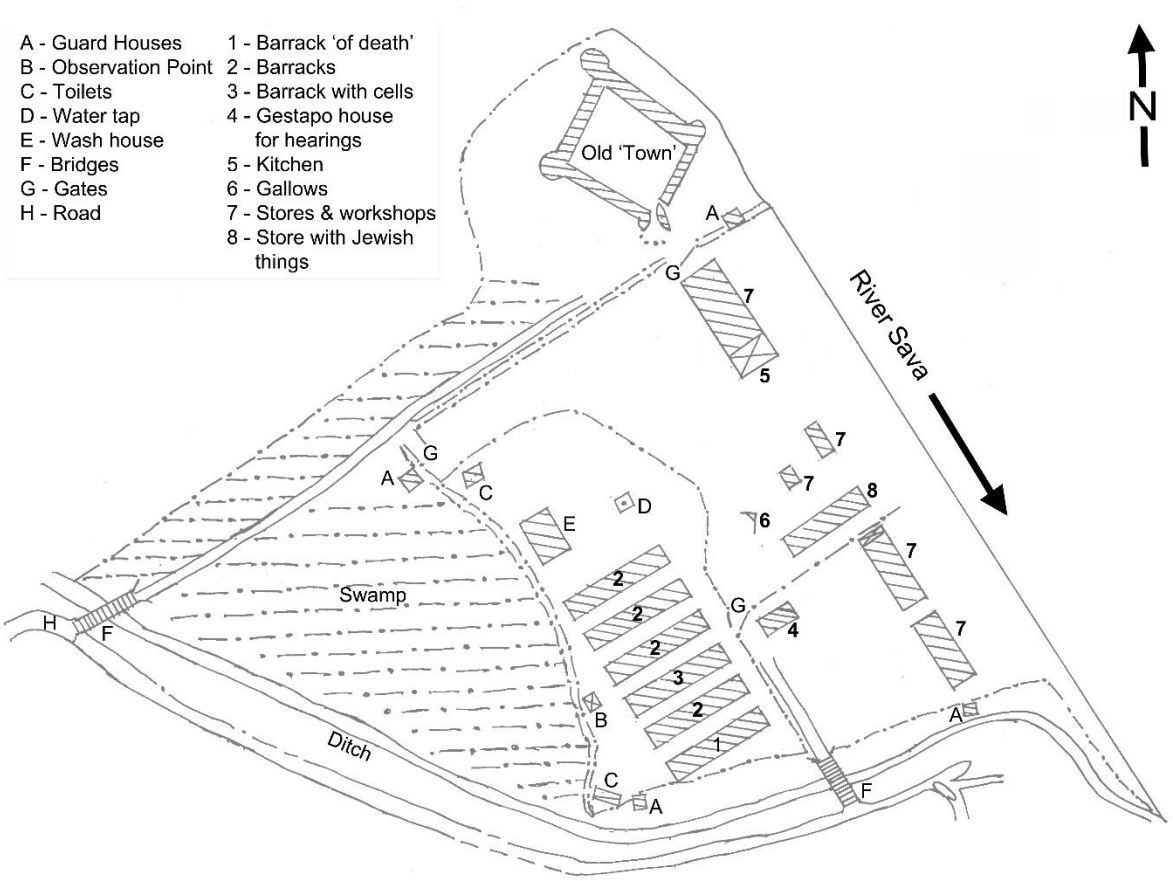

Figure 34 Map of the concentration camp on the river Sava

In this sense, her witness testimony provides a visceral link between the two places, separated by not more than 15 minutes' walk, the old mill and concentration camp, as well as between different spaces (ghetto-camp), times and temporalities. In 1941 she was a girl observing her neighbours being taken into the concentration camp and 38 years later, in 1979 her memories are written and published, at the time when only few traces of the concentration camp having been at the river shore remain, like the water tap at the centre of the former camp. Her 'having been there', apparent through the recollection of details such as the furniture that was moved from one location to the other, and her gaze sensitive to the absence of the Jews that were sharing the living space with the people from Šabac for less than a year, evokes the discourse around the Jewish absence from Europe, as the result of the Holocaust (Cole 2003; Gruber 2002; Hilberg 2003, Tych and Adamczyk-Garbowska 2014).

Before I continue to examine in detail the particularity of the location where the camp was situated and the events that unfolded after the group was interned in the concentration camp, I first need to briefly zoom-out to introduce the wider picture around the beginnings of the Second World War in Šabac; as this is essential for setting the scene for the final episode in the journey of the Kladovo transport.

Spring: Beginning of the war in Yugoslavia

Figure 35 Map of Serbia between April 1941 and 1944. [Available at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/88/Territory_Of_The_German_Military_Commander_In_Serbia_1941-44.png Accessed 20 March 2018]

The Second World War had reached Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941, and the geo-political map of the region changed almost overnight. Yugoslavia capitulated on 17 April, after only 11 days. The space of Yugoslavia was re-tailored and divided among the Axis Powers (Manoschek 1993, Pavlowitch 2008); consequently, the river Sava became the borderline between the newly formed Independent State of Croatia and the Territory of the German Military Commander in Serbia (figure 35). Šabac, thus, became a border town, whose riverine landscape now signalled the divide and yet immediate proximity of particularly atrocious

warfare (Manoschek 1993, Pavlowitch 2008). On a larger macro-geographical scale this will become apparent during and after the following summer 1941, when organised Yugoslav partisan resistance commence their campaign in the region around Šabac (Manoschek 1993, Pavlowitch 2008).

In contrast to the quick pace of the events unfolding on the macro scale, for the members of the Kladovo transport the first few months of the war did not seem to bring significant change in their status or living conditions (Anderl and Manoschek 2004). The immediately introduced anti-Jewish measures affected the local Jewish community with much greater severity (Vojinović 2015). The 'foreign' Jews already experienced deprivation of their possessions, displacement from their homes and respective countries of origin, and were, at this point – in April 1941 – already living in ghetto-like circumstances for about a year and half. The only thing difference were the yellow arm bands with the word *Jude* written on them that they received on 10 May 1941 (Jovanović 1997). However, this is not to say that their personal responses did not reflect an awareness of the severe implications of the fact that their persecutors caught up with them. For some, this was recognised as the very last chance to attempt to save themselves by any means. For example, for Herta and Romek Reich and a few of their friends, the beginning of war directly forced them to pursue their escape from the Nazis, thus detaching themselves from the remainder of the Kladovo transport. Instead of staying put in Šabac, they embarked on a long journey that took them via the Adriatic coast and the full length of Italy, before they reached safety in a refugee camp in Bari (Italy) in 1943 (Reich 2014). They were, however, saved. As mentioned above, those who stayed in Šabac were placed in a concentration camp in July 1941, where they were soon to be joined by the local Jews (Vojinović 2015).

Summer: The location of the camp

The relatively short walk between the old mill and the concentration camp marked yet another, but crucial, step away for the group from any hope of reaching safety. Moving away from the inhabited area of the town to impermanent shelters on the river shore signals significant worsening of their position. This decline is pinpointed even by the physicality of the architecture that they were now moving into; wooden barracks, without

floor or glass in the windows that did not seem to have been meant to last and were prone to flooding. Moreover, as Jovanović's quote reveals, the refugees even had to bring their beds, tables and stove with them, underscoring the fact that they were moving into a place not equipped for human habitation. They were then separated according to their gender and enclosed with barbed wire. Despite some freedom of movement that they seemed to have enjoyed initially (Anderl and Manoschek 2004), their situation changed swiftly from ghettoization to incarceration, following the same pattern that was at the time being implemented all over Nazi dominated Europe (Hilberg 2003).

Although the impermanence of the architectural construction of the concentration camp in Šabac relates to the immediate proximity of the river, it also testifies to the haste with which the German troops were moving through the Balkans. The choice of the locations and the infrastructure of isolation, incarceration and annihilation – from ghettos to concertation and death camps, and including the transit between those places – across Europe, informs contemporary scholarship on space-making strategies behind the Nazis' plans for mass destruction (Cole 2016; Gigliotti 2009; Hilberg 2003). Similar to the industrial infrastructure in places such as the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp, where the modernist idea of mass production thwarts into mass destruction (contributions in Gutman and Berenbaum 1994), the impermanence of spaces and places of incarceration in Serbia should be seen as part of the same network that was spreading across Europe at great speed (Filipović 1967; Koljanin 1992, 2007; Manoschek 1993).

Studies show that despite the swampy ground, unsuitable for permanent building near its banks, the river Sava was strategically very important to the Nazis. It seems to have played a key role in spatially conceptualizing the implementation of the 'final solution' in Serbia, which is manifested in the decision making process behind the establishment of a main concentration camp for all of Serbia. Most of the sites considered as possible locations for larger camps were in very close proximity to the river Sava – along the border line between Serbia and Croatia (Filipović 1967; Koljanin 1992; Manoschek 1993). Among other places along the river these included several locations of particular relevance for the history of the Kladovo transport. Apart from Šabac they are Zasavica, Jarak and Zemun/Novi Belgrade, all of which will be discussed further below (Koljanin 1992, Manoschek 1993). The place that was selected in Šabac as the site for the camp is located in a unique position of isolation and

yet immediate proximity to both the town and the river (Filipović 1967; Koljanin 1992; Manoschek 1993). Thus the same physical qualities that make the site attractive for leisure activities nowadays, provided the ideal setting to separate undesired subjects from the rest of the town during the war. Yet, despite its 'favourable' position, frequent flooding did not allow any further plans for the expansion of the camp on this particular site.

Autumn: The first victims

The conditions for the inmates in the concentration camp on the river Sava soon deteriorated further significantly. Mačva, the area around Šabac, was the first in Yugoslavia to witness Yugoslavian partisan and Četniks uprising against the German occupation. On 21 September 1941 (exactly a year after the Kladovo transport first arrived), Šabac was the first Serbian town attacked by the Partisans. As part of retaliation for this, men from the town, including the inmates from the concentration camp, were made to take part in the, so-called, 'Bloody march'. This was 46 kilometre, six-day march (as it was described by participants) from Klenak (a village on the opposite side of the Sava from Šabac) to Jarak (a village 23 kilometres further to the northwest). As mentioned above, Jarak (Yarak) was one of the places considered at the time, as the potential location for building of a concentration camp meant for the incarceration of Jews from the whole territory of Serbia. The march lasted from 24 to 30 September, when the men were returned to the camp in Šabac (Manoschek 1993; Vojinović 2015). Those who could not keep up were shot along the way. This included 21 men from the Kladovo transport, who did not return to the concentration camp after the march and thus became the first victims from the group at the hands of the German army (Anderl and Manoschek 2004, Manoschek 1993).

Zasavica

Figure 36 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Zasavica.

In retribution for 21 German troops, killed by Serbian partisans in October 1941, it was ordered that 2100 people (this implied Jews and Gipsies first) should be shot. In this context 805 men were to be taken from the concentration camp in Šabac, and the remaining number from 'Topovske šupe' (meaning 'cannon sheds') concentration camp in Belgrade. The internees from Šabac, including all the remaining men from the Kladovo transport (over 400), were brought to a field known as 'Poloj', belonging to the family Ljubičić, in the village of Zasavica, located a few kilometres upstream along the Sava from Šabac, on 12 and 13 October 1941 (Mihajlović pers. comm.; Vojinović 2015). Milorad Jelesić, one of a group of Serbian men who were forced to partake in the events, described what took place in those two days:

> On the very day of Saint Cyriacus the Hermit [12 Oct] I was taken out with the group of 40 men, across into Mačvanska Mitrovica, and from there to Zasavica. We were marched to the Sava and were commanded to sit down. The soil was a swampy wetland, so we asked them not to torture us, but to kill us right away. A German who spoke Serbian said that we were not to be killed, we were labourers. At that moment a German battalion of 150 soldiers came. Lunch was brought there for the Germans and they ate. After lunch, from behind the corn field in the direction of Mitrovica, a group of about 50 people wearing civilian clothes was brought forward; I recognized that they were Jews. Each one of them had to approach the wooden stakes which

were driven into the ground at every 1-2 m; they had to stand so that the stick was between their legs. They had to face the ditch. Behind them four German soldiers approached them carrying an open blanket. The Jews were throwing something into it; probably money and other valuables. When this was done, an officer gave the order and the Germans started shooting people in the back of the head – two [soldiers] for each Jew.

We would then run to the ditch and throw the dead into the hole; and then Germans commanded that we search their pockets and take out any valuables we find.

When the first group of those shot was dealt with, we would then run back again behind the firing squad, and from behind the corn field another group was brought forward, which was treated in the same way in every detail. That very evening we were brought back to Sremska Mitrovica, and all 40 of us were locked in a wagon. The following day, all 40 of us were taken again to the same place in Zasavica, and the shooting started the same way as the previous day. While the first day only Jews were shot, there were now more of our Gipsies than the Jews.

Throughout the shootings several Germans recorded [photographed] different moments such as: victims before they were shot, as they were stepping across the wooden stakes, us carrying the bodies into the ditch, the shooting squad and other moments. (in Anderl and Manoschek 2004, 246; my translation from Serbian)

A few days after the shooting in Zasavica word about it spread around the town of Šabac (Babović 2010). In the concentration camp, however, the women were never told for sure why the men did not return. At times they would be told that they were taken into another camp for labour, other times that they have been shot (Anderl and Manoschek 2004).

Winter and spring: The final stop

In late December 1941, the main concentration camp for the Jews in Serbia was opened near Zemun, in Novi Belgrade ('New Belgrade' on the northern bank of the river Sava) and named *Judenlager Semlin.* Instead of further searching for a location where a concentration

camp would be built, which proved to be very challenging because of the swampy terrain around the river Sava, the Germans decided to adapt the existing infrastructure of the relatively newly built modernist Fairground (which opened in 1937) on that site (figure 37) into a concentration camp. Figure 37 shows how close the camp was to Belgrade; yet, like in Šabac, the river was at the time the borderline between the Independent State of Croatia, where the camp was situated, and the Territory of German Military Commander in Serbia. The former national pavilions of the Fairground were now repurposed into spaces for accommodation of the camp inmates, camp kitchen, morgue, hospital and the like. The central tower intended for the Fairground management, was taken over by the camp management.

Figure 37 Fairground before the war. [Available at http://www.starosajmiste.info/sr/ Accessed 19 March 2018]

In January 1942, it was decided to move the remaining members of the Kladovo transport from Šabac into *Judenlager Semlin*. Grigorije Babović noted in his chronicle: '26 Jan, Monday, all the Jewish women together with their children were taken away from Šabac to

the Judenlager Semlin. This is how all the Jews disappeared from Šabac.' (Babović 2010, my translation from Serbian). The women and children were transferred by train, but had to walk from the train station in Zemun, around 10 kilometres away, through the snow to reach the camp (Koljanin pers. comm.). A number of infants seem to have died along the way (Anderl and Manoschek 2004). Anna Hecht, one of the two female members of the Kladovo transport who survived the camp, remembers that they were transferred into a camp where there were mainly women (she mentions 7000 women) and very few men. Apart from Jews, there were also a lot of Roma – again mainly women – in the camp. The Roma would receive even harsher treatment and less food than the Jews, only what the latter would leave over. The first task that Anna Hecht was given to do in the camp was to break the ice on the river Sava (Anderl and Manoschek 2001, 229-230). *Judenlager Semlin* was dominated by women because most of Jewish men – from across Serbia – had already been killed by the time the camp opened. For example, Sime Spitzer, the head of the Yugoslavian Jewish Community who was in charge of facilitating the stay of the Kladovo transport until the beginning of the war in Yugoslavia, had already been killed at this point, probably in one of the mass shootings similar to the one in Zasavica.

Figure 38 Gas Van. [Available at https://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Du%C5%A1egupka Accessed 20 March 2018]

In March 1942, a gas van was brought to Belgrade. This was a killing machine that had already been used in Chelmno and Riga. The gas van started circulating twice per day

(except Sunday) between the concentration camp and Jajinci, on the outskirts of Belgrade, where the dead bodies of those killed along the way were buried in mass graves. The journey the van took involved crossing the pontoon bridge, that replaced the bomb damaged King Alexander Bridge, over the river Sava, representing the borderline, into Serbia. Vladimir Milutinović, a Serbian prisoner of war, remembers:

> I used the shovel to dig the ditch in the ground. We dug them up, and the prisoners would later fill in the pit. They were brought daily by the Germans… I could see a small car approaching from far with a German officer inside. It was followed by a well closed heavily smoking vehicle… Two months, from March until May 1942, I was digging the holes for the Jews who were gassed. When the guards saw this convoy approaching, they would chase us away and wouldn't allow us to watch… at the time I dug 81 or 82 mass graves, where around 1000 people was buried. (Anderl and Manoschek 2004, 271-272; my translation from Serbian)

The last journey the gas van took was on 9 May 1942. The number of those killed in the gas van is estimated to have been between 8000 and 11000 (Vojinović 2015). This made Serbia the second country, after Estonia, to be declared '*Judenfrei*'; free of Jews.

Filming the concentration camp on the Old Fairground

After the extermination of Jews, the concentration camp changed from being *Judenlager Semlin* into *Anhaltelager Semlin*, imprisoning Yugoslavian prisoners of war until 1944, when it closed, after the liberation of Belgrade. During the Allied bombing of Belgrade in 1944, the camp was substantially damaged and only few buildings from the original Fairground survived. Today the *Old* Fairground is a neglected urban area of Belgrade, hemmed in by the river Sava on one side, large roads, newly built hotels, business and shopping centres on the other. Apart from a number of dilapidated residential houses, and a few small businesses, this location housed, until recently, a number of art studios. Some of the most prominent Serbian artists and art professors, like Olga Jevrić, Dušan Junačkov or Slobodan Roksandić worked in the so-called *Tower*, the former central tower of the Fairground, where the

concentration camp management was located between 1941 and 1944. The artists were forced to leave their studios a number of years ago, when the city started considering this location for a Holocaust memorial centre. As the decision on this has still not been made, the former studios are left to ruin, looted and occasionally squatted.

Figure 39 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Tower at the old fairground.

This is how I found them in the summer of 2017, when I filmed the footage that I show in my film. Both entrances to the Tower were wide open, and the inside corridors and stair cases as well as the former studios were full of rubble made up of broken sculptures, used tubes and cans of paint, torn up drawings, etc. In the rubble, I have noticed a poster, with my name on it, which advertised an exhibition entitled 'Haptic states' in 2012 in which I took part. I was barely able to recognise the studio of my former professor Slobodan Roksandić (who lent his voice to Bata Gedalja in my film), where I would sometimes come for consultations during my studies of fine art in Belgrade between 1999 and 2008. In one of the studios I found a large swastika made of cardboard, which features in the film (figure 40). This was but one of the ways that the artists working in these studios responded to the tangible history of the location.

Figure 40 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Inside one of the former art studios in the Tower.

Apart from a few static shots that mainly show the inside spaces of the tower and are meant to introduce the location of the former Judenlager Semlin, I decided to film the site of the camp from a moving car. This makes reference to the many drives of the gas van between the camp and the burial location at Jajinci. In my film, the drive around the Old Fairground continues onto the Brankov Bridge, which is roughly at the same place where the pontoon bridge used to be during the war, and further still through the streets of Belgrade to Jajinci, the place where the bodies were buried after being suffocated in the gas van. My partner and I have 'performed' this 40 minute drive several times in the summer, and again in December, of 2017. As I could not find a map of the exact route that the gas van had taken at the time, we were not able to reconstruct it in greater detail. This is why I decided not to show the whole route that we drove during the filming, but to restrict what I am showing in the film to the beginning and the end of the drive, i.e. the camp, crossing the bridge and then approaching the burial site in Jajinci, which is now a memorial park.

However, most importantly, the drive shows movement for the first time in the film. After about 50 minutes of consecutive static shots, the camera finally moves and seems to release the tension built up through the absence of movement throughout the film. The image moves across the location of the former camp, and beyond, showing places in all their everyday banality. The drive has certain immersive quality, and is accompanied by diegetic sound, recorded inside the car during the drive. In editing, I initially removed the sound completely, leaving the drive to be observed in absolute silence. I felt that the silence adequately accompanies or even commemorates the meaning of the driving sequence in

the film which makes reference to the many drives that took place between the camp and Jajinci and during which thousands of women and children were killed. However, when I returned the sound back together with the image during the editing process, it felt that the sound added greatly to the immersive quality of the image. Furthermore, it is still perceived as silence, because it is essentially the recording of the 'silence' in the car (in the sense there is no voice or talking over the image). However trivial the gentle sounds of the traffic, the car's engine running, going over bumps on the road and the clicking of the indicators may seem, when one considers them conceptually, in practice, I felt that, they added greatly to the eeriness of the realisation of the meaning of the drive in the film. The meaning of this movement in the narrative is not readily apparent when the camera starts moving, as the viewer only realises it after listening to the voiced over testimony of Vladimir Milutinović (quoted above), which takes place several minutes after the beginning of the drive.

Figure 41 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen.

In the film, the split screen image always combines the footage from different drives. Although I played with the rhythms of the recordings, I aimed to show the approximately same locations at different times. I have noticed that the difference in the times of the day between the two recordings that coincide on the screen seems more striking than the difference between the seasons that I was also hoping to show. As some footage was recorded in August and some in December, the trees in certain images are barren. Through showing the camp in different seasons (however subtle the difference may seem on the screen) I am signalling that the drives of the gas van lasted over the change of seasons, it

started in winter and ended in spring. After the two images meet on the same path in the memorial park Jainci, the films ends abruptly, even before the car has stopped.

Figure 42 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. Last frame in the film.

VIII Conclusions

The bodies of the men killed in Zasavica were exhumed twice. The first time, during the war, was to move them about 100m further away from the place of the shooting, away from the river, to a field now marked with several monuments (Figure 43a); this was possibly because of the risk of flooding in the original field. The second time, the remains were transferred to the Jewish cemetery in Belgrade and placed beneath the monument erected in 1959 by the Austrian Jewish community in memory of the victims from the Kladovo transport (Figure 43b). As already mentioned above, there is another monument in Serbia dedicated to the group, erected in Kladovo in 2002 (Figure 43c) and there is one memorial plaque in Yad Vashem. A few other monuments, like the one in the old fairground, or the one in the memorial park Jajinci are dedicated to the victims of the Nazi Germany and therefore include the members of the Kladovo transport.

Figure 43 a) Monuments in Zasavica; b) Monument in the Jewish cemetery in Belgrade; c) Monument in Kladovo. Photo by Vesna Lukic

Although these monuments belong to the post-war means of remembering the Kladovo transport, and thus add to the history of this group in some ways, I do not show them in my film. I consider them to belong to a different kind of memory practice to the one I effect through my project. They are more likely to reflect the broader societal and political discourse around remembering and commemorating the past; and as such they already mediate the history in a particular way. In line with Foucault's idea on traditional or classical ways of doing history, I referred to the monuments in my research only in as much as I can use them as documents (Foucault 2007, 6-8). For example, at times, the position of a monument would help me orient towards an exact location of the event that I was aiming to trace with my camera; this is how I was able to establish the location of the field in Zasavica where the shooting of the men took place in 1941.

In contrast to this however, my methods more generally in this project seem to resonate better with the reverse process and the new and alternative ways of doing history – turning documents into monuments of sort (Foucault 2007). In approaching the journey of the Kladovo transport, I primarily wanted to learn from the passengers' own experiences along the way, and was therefore seeking the material that would enable me to engage as directly as possible with this failed escape attempt. In this sense, for example, as there are no more survivors from the original group, letters and other archival documents provided me with a relatively direct insight into the journey. But while Hilberg discusses the power of documents 'having been there', as a direct witness to the past (Hilberg 2001), I am interested in expanding the idea of witnessing through the audio-visual media. This is why I see the process of working on and with the text, as I am doing it in my film, as a way of voicing out the past. My editing of the texts, that were read by native (Austrian) German or Serbian speakers, was confined to shortening the testimonies, focusing on the information I deemed essential for the narrative. As I thus kept to the original phrasing and the language the texts were written in I would argue that my approach remains faithful to the original accounts of the members of the Kladovo transport and their contemporaries. In this way, I am creating my own interpretation of the history of the Kladovo transport (through editing and combining testimonies), while at the same time, leaving the 'original' accessible to the audience. I believe that in this way the method I used in making the film transparently shows the process of working on the narrative and integrates it into the cinematic structure.

My desire to stay as close as possible to the tangible vestiges that could directly testify to what the passengers' experiences may have been like along the way, is also key to my approach to the locations where the Kladovo transport spent time along their journey. I attempted to retrace their steps in some way, by dwelling on the relevant locations with my camera. Similar to Susan Silas's 225 miles' Helmbrechts walk in which she re-enacted the walk that female prisoners were forced to undertake in 1945 (Silas 2011), I embarked on an equally (seemingly) futile attempt to 'walk in the footsteps of the past'. While Silas tried to hold on to the accuracy of the Helmbrechts walk by walking the same route and the same daily millage as the prisoners, I mainly focused on specific places where Kladovo transport spent time and the ways in which those places can inform me on the temporality of the past

(after all the Jewish refugees were barely moving at all during the long periods of time that they spent in certain places). Nonetheless, like in the case with Silas's walk, my project, through the emphasis on the process, is an act of remembering and dealing with the difficult past (Cole 2013). Filming the locations traces my own experience of discovery and learning about the subject matter. Furthermore, the entire process of making the film about this ill-fated journey has enabled me to create a cinematic environment for sharing of that experience with the viewers of my film.

This project draws from the discourse around temporality inherent in the cinematic media in order to explore the journey of the Kladovo transport as a temporal event. I have argued that the notion of temporality offers an optimal framework for deeper engagement with this historical narrative, as this failed escape attempt is charged with particularly poignant temporal elements. The excruciatingly long period of over two years that these Jewish refugees spent in the meanwhile between their forced departure from their countries of origin and the destination that they never reached, is but one of the temporal aspects that I have considered in this study.

In editing, I have pushed the ideas on time and temporality further, as I have been working on ways to make time 'visible' in the film. For example, this is the main reason for the split screen image throughout the film, which has enabled me to demonstrate and create disparity between the images and thus emphasise different registers of time that appear simultaneously on the screen. This multiplying of the temporal layers in the film feeds back into the idea of the journey of the Kladovo transport as a palimpsest composed of complex layering of different temporalities.

The film ends seemingly abruptly, as in both screens the drive slows down and the images nearly coincide on the same path in the memorial park Jajinci. I do not offer any further comment in the film. There are several reasons for this. I believe that the way the film is made is a comment in its own right. Through aesthetic and conceptual choices that I have come to in this project, I signal my position clearly through non-verbal artistic means, and do not need to sum up my arguments differently. The ending reinforces the emphasis on

the process, as everything was already 'said' before, through the film. This implies that in a way, the aftermath is also already in the film, in the sense that all the images (with exception of the archive ones at the beginning) are taken after the event, more specifically, in the very recent past, and are thus the testimony of things that came after the journey of the Kladovo transport ended fatally. On the other hand, in line with the discourse around Holocaust representations, any kind of added comment may signal a way to give meaning to the traumatic events, and thus offer reconciliation with the difficult past (Young 2000). In contrast to this, I wanted to leave my film open and seemingly unfinished, without the possibility of reconciliation.

The openness of the cinematic element on this PaR project is inherently linked to the written component, in the sense that they have both been developed simultaneously and as part of a single process. In thinking about the outcomes of this study and the ways in which they could be presented to a wider audience, thus continuing their lives within and outside of academia, I saw PaR as one of the modes of opening a third space for art production. As I partially rely on my background in the visual arts, I see my practice as responding equally well to the 'black box' and the 'white cube' (Uroskie 2014), underpinning cinema and the gallery space respectively. Incorporating the discourses of both, PaR extends creative means of dealing with the past, and it prompted me to address new audiences through my work.

I recommend that my film is best viewed on a big screen, in a cinema type setting, rather than on the computer screen or in an open gallery space. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, I believe that the big screen would enable a more immersive experience, and secondly, I think that it is important to see and experience my film as a set duration of time. Cinema encourages the viewer to engage with a film from beginning to end, whilst in a gallery space the audiences are more inclined to dip in and out of the content and therefore decide their own beginning and end points. However, by cinema, I am thinking about the viewing conditions, not an exclusive venue. I would ideally like to show *Two Emperors and a Queen* in different venues, and am particularly interested in different museums or educational settings; still with these two criteria in mind, big screen and set duration.

In presenting my work to different audiences inside and outside academia, I am communicating new and alternative modes of meaning making. My exploration of the

journey of the Kladovo transport puts forward the idea of personalised and embodied research and expands the perspectives for both critical and creative ways of knowing.

Figure 44 Still from Two Emperors and a Queen. The opening frame of the film.

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